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Incorporating Review of Reviews July 1950

CONTENTS

		PAGE
CORRESPONDENCE		2
EDITORIAL		5
LOVE OF LIVING	*Albert Camus*	7
LETTERS TO CLIFFORD TOLCHARD	*John Cowper Powys*	11
TRUE STORY	*A Poem by Gilbert Phelps*	23
IMAGES OF HOME	*Stephen Spender*	26
THE FAIRY-TALE AS TEACHER	*P. L. Travers*	32
RESURRECTIONS	*André Malraux*	39
THE ROBOT PICODIRIBIBI	*Henry Miller*	42
AN IRREGULAR GENIUS	*Herbert Read*	50
SONG	*A Poem by Tessa Sillars*	56
THEATRE NOTES	*Gerard Fay*	57
GASTRONOMICAL NOTES	*Henry Kahn*	60
TRAVEL NOTES	*Alan Ross*	62
AIR TRAVEL NOTES	*John Stroud*	66
BOOK REVIEWS: by *Gerald Bailey; E. Lampert; George Seaver; Stephen Winsten; Michael Hamburger; Margaret Crosland*		69

ART SECTION between pp. 40 and 41.

The
HUDSON REVIEW

AMERICA'S MAJOR LITERARY QUARTERLY

In its Spring Number, 1950

- EZRA POUND's translation of the Analects of Confucius, Part I.
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- WILLIAM EMPSON: Wit in the Essay on Criticism.
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- R. P. BLACKMUR: The Possessed of Dostoevsky.
- ALLEN TATE: Longinus.
- FRANCIS FERGUSSON: Hamlet, the Analogy of Action.

as well as contributions by: CLEANTH BROOKS, I. A. RICHARDS, YVOR WINTERS, SUSANNE K. LANGER, KENNETH BURKE, MARIANNE MOORE, JOSEPH KERMAN, WILLIAM TROY, R. P. WARREN, and others.

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English Editor, The Hudson Review, The Queen's College, Oxford

CORRESPONDENCE

GEORGE ORWELL

SIR,

George Orwell was the only possible successor to G.B.S. His family background was similar (though his opportunities were greater), his intellectual approach was similar and, as with Shaw, his limitations were also his strong point. Both of them knew the surface of life and society thoroughly; both had a vivid and self-contained picture of phenomena, especially social phenomena, which they would never dream of questioning. They were impressive figures because they did not hide their scorn for fools and obviously were not fools themselves. When Orwell was tempted to go deeper than the surface phenomena he had organised so thoroughly into a system, as, for instance, into those areas where poetry is made, he was not at ease: his view of Eliot was distorted; he was altogether wrong about Henry Miller. Compared with a man such as Ford Madox Ford, for example, both Shaw and Orwell were rather like gifted children—but children who could have tied Ford in knots.

It was difficult to know Orwell, as the article by Mr. Fyvel unconsciously demonstrates. You were always hindered by the Massive Outer Man which he cultivated so assiduously. Between you and Orwell there was usually a barrier of livestock gossip and Interior Decoration for the Amateur. This is not a charge of insensitivity or unawareness of personal values: Orwell was extremely sensitive in some ways, and he was not half the Philistine that H. G. Wells was. But he did not find it easy to establish a true and uninhibited relationship with others. With most people of your own class and outlook, you know instinctively what is shared, what you have in common. Orwell was never sure of this. He was the Etonian of poor middle-class parentage who wanted to be a man of the people—an astonishing mix-up. Mr. Fyvel refers to his change of name for literary purposes. At one time he was going to legalise this, but never did. When I

asked him why not, he said that one could not discard a name so lightly after all, and added, 'You know, the Egyptians believed enormous power was contained in a name.' This is the kind of staggering ingenuousness you find so often in men of Orwell's calibre. A lot of strands in his personality could not be sorted out: adaptation to a new acquaintance was difficult; he loved to create a mild sensation and then smooth it down with a somewhat pedantic plausibility. After all, it was Orwell who once began an essay with the statement: 'George Gissing, perhaps the most important English novelist of the 19th Century . . .'

I think Mr. Fyvel's essay is very much what Orwell would have written about himself if he had got outside to have a look in. In other words, he would not have looked in, but would have appraised the doors and windows and, of course, the light shining out because it was unavoidable. It is a wholly social presentation of a man who never considered individuals but men in society. There is the awkward reference to 'the saint', a concession to the demand for personal valuation. As some saints have won the confidence of birds and beasts, and others have flown three times round a cathedral, it is a rather loose category. Orwell was a gentle man, which may be what is meant. His humour was limited but, when it came, it charmed with its sudden gusto. He was a little worried by the suspicion that a writer's life was not a man's life. He used to enjoy saying that the working-class respected literature, and he felt that Goebbels, by the nature of his death, had vindicated his tribe.

Orwell would have enjoyed the Muggeridge article best—it expresses the kind of unexpected truth he loved. Like so many other writers of the first rank, Orwell exploited the paradox—not baldly like G.K.C. or cruelly like Shaw, but patiently and pedagogically. He loved deflating Left-wing intellectuals. I remember an article he once wrote on North Africa. In it he described the wretched poverty of the Arabs but claimed in the concluding paragraph that they were almost certainly happier than the average Englishman. A prominent Labour M.P. read it and protested that Orwell was a traitor to the

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working-class movement. Call him a self-conscious heretic and you are near to the truth.

When we discuss which of Orwell's works will be read in the future, we are getting academic. He practically killed himself telling us that we are unlikely to read any of his works in a future many of us will live to suffer. This is not a mere scoring-point. Orwell never professed any belief in absolute values. If all the copies of *Hamlet* were destroyed tomorrow, Orwell would have said quite simply that *Hamlet* no longer existed. In this sense he was undeniably a Common Man. The inference we can draw is that what Orwell told us in his books is more important than Orwell himself. I think he really meant that. He was extremely honest.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN ATKINS

Dewlish, Dorset

SIR,

I think that it ought perhaps to be pointed out, in answer to Aldous Huxley's comment on hypnopaedia, that although men can undoubtedly be 'conditioned to love their servitude', modern work suggests that the extent to which this can be done is probably strictly limited. I said in reviewing Caudwell that 'freedom' has graduated from being a liberal abstraction to the status of a factor essential for the coherence of societies and of individual personalities, and the effects on both of conditioning directed to produce servitude are probably very similar to the effects of conditioning a horse to live on one straw a day. An even more important criticism of Huxley, and of Orwell, viewed as prophets, is the growing evidence that technical progress and central tyranny are cultural incompatibles. It is more than likely that a totalitarian order, because it invariably subsists, as Orwell suggests, by encouraging paranoid attitudes—fear and hate being the only driving-mechanisms in any power-centred society, to which group coherence and aid within the group are always subordinate—is bound to destroy its own technology by its hatred of independent thought. You cannot have progress in technology without progress in theory, or progress in theory in a paranoid society. The genetics row in Russia, the present trend of political physics in America, and what happened to the German research organisation under Hitler support this view.

None of this, of course, reduces the value of the Orwell-Huxley warning to all scientific workers against absorption into a paranoid system. But research in psychology seems to me today to be a greater menace to the power-society and its psychopathy than to the individual. I hope I may prove to be right.

Yours, etc.,

ALEX COMFORT

London, S.E.23

'ORPHEUS'

SIR,

Since writing on Cocteau's *Orpheus* (June), the film has now arrived in London. I hurried there on the very first night in the hope of recapturing some of the delight the play once roused so profusely. Alas! what a sad disappointment! The film is at moments exciting and moving, but compared with the light, witty, delicate touch of the early play, how heavy handed, how clumsy, how over-burdened with obscure symbols and weighted down with up-to-date political intrusions. Heurtebise, the glazier boy, still retaining his name, has been changed into a chauffeur. He is no longer a disguised god; he is in the service of La Princesse — DEATH. The happy ending is most unconvincing. Therefore, this word of warning: the praise I gave to the play can—unfortunately—not be extended to the present-day film.

HEIDI HEIMANN

London, S.W.13

THANKS

SIR,

I should like to be able to express my thanks to the anonymous donor who so kindly sent me £4 as a 'thank-offering' for my *Sermon for Easter Day*.

Yours, etc.,

E. F. F. HILL

Hollybush, Ledbury

EDITORIAL

IN the latest volume of his *Journal*, which has recently been published in Paris, André Gide has an entry of immense significance to our time. 'The world,' he writes, 'can only be saved, if it can be, by the rebels. Without them there would be an end to our civilisation, our culture, all that we love and that gave to our presence on earth a secret justification. They are, these rebels, the salt of the earth and the men sent from God. For I am convinced that God does not exist, and that we have to create him.'

Civilisations have collapsed and cultures have become sterile because they have failed to discharge the task which is implied in Gide's statement: the task of interweaving the spiritual with the material and political, and of the material and political with the spiritual, so that these are not separate autonomous spheres but one life, mysterious, surprising, never completely penetrable, of which no typical or dogmatic form can be found, and to which no total expression can be given. And Gide assigns this task to the rebel, to the man who, in all his acts and all his conditions, is unsubdued by the pressure of external authority.

The rebel must not be confused with the revolutionary, that hero of yesterday who has revealed himself as the epitome of the age of terror in which we live. He has raised his voice but there was only anger in it and no joy; he has shown himself capable of revenge but not of forgiveness; he has spoken but he has not uttered the truth; he has broken all fundamental human relationships and set up instead relationships to a party, a cause or an idea until, in the end, nobility itself has become a blind and bloodless monster.

At such a time, when the world is convulsed and its foundation shattered and the dried flowers of its culture scattered into nothingness, it is only the rebel who can emerge as the regenerating ferment to build with nobler worth. His fundamental relations are unbroken, his joy undiminished because he affirms, absolutely, in the midst of the very experience of the non-existence of God, the presence of God: he is unsubdued by disorder, by

chaos and by nothingness. He lives in isolation because he has none of the exploiting power of the revolutionary type, but he lives in no detached autonomous realm, either of the spirit or of 'matter', but in the realm of fidelity where all detached realms are fused into a living whole. In all other realms we are in the presence of idols and objects, and all idols bear the character of the false. The problem of our time is to break the tyranny of the enslaved spirit's worship of abstract absolutes: the task of the rebel is to create, without anger, out of the absurdity in which we live, out of his isolation, out of the void of the non-existence of God. But his ministry has not yet begun.

LOVE OF LIVING

ALBERT CAMUS

AT night, in Palma, life flows slowly toward the quarter of the cabarets, behind the market, dark and silent streets until the moment you come to the doors with Venetian shutters where light and music filter through. I spent the better part of a night in one of these cafés. The interior was small, very low and rectangular. It was painted green and decorated with pink garlands. The panelled ceiling was covered with tiny red bulbs. Miraculously tucked into this small space were an orchestra, a bar with multi-coloured bottles, and the public, squeezed to death, shoulder to shoulder—men only. In the middle were two square yards of free space from which glasses and bottles were shot off by the waiter to the four corners of the room. Not a person in the place was conscious. Everyone was yelling. A naval officer of sorts was belching alcoholic courtesies in my face. At my table, an ageless dwarf was telling me the story of his life. But I was too excited to listen to him. The orchestra kept playing melodies of which one could catch only the rhythm because everybody's feet were beating time. At times the door would open. Amidst yells, the new arrival would be wedged in between two chairs. (There is a certain ease in enjoying oneself which is a mark of true civilisation. The Spanish are one of the few civilised peoples in Europe.)

A sudden clash of the cymbals and a woman leaped abruptly into the tiny circle in the middle of the cabaret. 'Twenty-one years old,' the officer said to me. I was dumbfounded. The face of a young girl, but sculpted in a mountain of flesh. The woman might have been six feet tall. She was enormous, and must have weighed three hundred pounds. She was wearing a yellow net, whose meshes brought into relief a checkerboard of white flesh. Her hands were on her hips and she was smiling; each corner of her mouth sent out a series of little ripples of flesh toward her ears. In the room there was no limit to the excitement. One could feel that the girl was known, liked, and awaited. She never stopped smiling. She looked all about the room and, still smiling and silent, started rippling her belly. The audience screamed and then clamoured for a song that seemed to be familiar. It was a nasal Andalusian song with a rhythmic clash of the cymbals every three measures. She sang, and at every clash pantomimed love with her whole body. In this monotonous and passionate movement real waves of flesh were born at her hips and died on her shoulders. The audience appeared crushed. But at the refrain, the girl, with an about-face,

holding her breasts in her open hands, opening her wet red mouth, picked up the melody, while the audience joined in the chorus, until everyone was caught up in the tumult. The girl, planted in the middle, dripping with sweat, her hair in disarray, reared up her massive body which swelled out in her yellow net. Like an unclean goddess emerging from the water, her brow low and bestial, her eyes hollow, the only sign of life she gave was a slight quivering of the knees, like that of horses after a race. In the midst of the throbbing life about her, she was like the base and exalting image of life, with the despair in her empty eyes and the thick sweat of her belly . . .

Without cafés and newspapers, it would be difficult to travel. A page printed in our own language, a place where, in the evening, we try to rub elbows with men, enables us to mimic, with a familiar gesture, the man we were at home and who, from a distance, seems so foreign. For the thing that gives value to travelling is fear. It shatters a kind of inner décor within us. It is no longer possible to cheat—to mask oneself behind one's working hours in office or factory (those hours which we protest against so strongly and which defend us so surely against the suffering of being alone). Thus, I always feel like writing novels in which my heroes would say, 'What would happen to me if it weren't for the hours I spend in my office?' or 'My wife is dead, but luckily I've got a big batch of orders to get ready for tomorrow.' Travelling takes away this refuge. Far from friends and family, from our language, torn away from all our supports, deprived of our masks (we don't know what the trolley fare is, and so on for everything), we are utterly at the surface of ourselves. Also, because we feel our souls to be sick, we endow each human being, each object, with its value as a miracle. A woman who dances without thinking, a bottle on a table, seen behind a curtain, each image becomes a symbol. Life in its entirety seems reflected there, in so far as our life at the moment is summed up there. Sensitive to all tones, how can we express the contradictory intoxications we are able to relish (even including that of lucidity)? And perhaps never has any region, unless it be the Mediterranean, taken me so far from, and so close to, myself.

Without doubt, my emotion in the Palma café was due to that. But at noon, on the other hand, in the deserted neighbourhood of the cathedral, among the old palaces with their cool courtyards, in the streets with their shadowy odours, it was the idea of a certain 'slowness' that struck me. Not a soul in these streets. In the miradors, old congealed women. And as I walked past the houses, stopping in the courtyards which were full of green plants and round grey columns, I melted into that odour of silence; I lost my limits, was nothing but the sound of my footsteps or the flock of birds whose shadows I glimpsed at the top of the still sunlit walls. I also spent long hours in the little Gothic cloister of San Francisco. Its fine, precious colonnade gleamed with that lovely golden yellow of old monuments in

Spain. In the courtyard were laurel roses, pepper plants, a well of forged iron from which hung a long, rusty, iron dipper. Passers-by drank from it. At times I still remember the sharp noise it made as it fell back on the stone of the well. Yet it was not the sweetness of living that this cloister taught me. In the dry flappings of its flocks of pigeons, the sudden silence brooding in the middle of the garden, in the lonely creaking of the well chain, I found a new yet familiar flavour. I was lucid and smiling before this game of appearances. It seemed to me that a gesture might have cracked that crystal in which the face of the world was smiling. Something was about to come undone; the flock of pigeons would die and each of them would fall slowly on its outspread wings. Only my silence and immobility gave plausibility to what so strongly resembled an illusion. I entered into the game. Without being taken in, I gave myself over to the appearances. A rich golden sun was gently warming the yellow stones of the cloister. A woman was drawing water from the well. In an hour, a minute, a second, perhaps right now, it all might crumble. And yet the miracle continued. The world went on—modest, ironic, and discreet (like certain gentle and prudent forms of the friendship of women). A balance was maintained, though coloured by the entire apprehension of its own end.

There was all my love of living: a silent passion for what was going, perhaps, to escape me, a bitterness beneath a flame. Each day I would leave the cloister as though separated from myself, as though inscribed for a brief moment in the duration of the world. And I am well aware of why I thought at the time of the sightless eyes of the Doric Apollos and the flaming and frozen figures of Giotto. (The decadence of Greek sculpture and the breaking up of Italian art begin with the appearance of the smile and the gaze. As if beauty ended where mind began.) It is because at that moment I really understood what countries of that kind could bring me. I am astonished that people can find certainties and rules of life on the shores of the Mediterranean; that they can satisfy their reason there and justify optimism and a sense of the social. For, indeed, what struck me at the time was not a world made to the measure of man—but rather one that closed over man. No, if the language of these countries harmonised with what resounded deeply within me, it was not because it answered my questions, but because it rendered them useless. It was not thanksgivings that might have risen to my lips, but rather the Nada which could be born only in the presence of landscapes crushed by the sun. There is no love of living without despair of living.

In Ibiza, every day I went to sit in the cafés which line the port. Around five o'clock, the young people of the region go strolling in two lanes all along the pier. Marriages are made there, as is all of life. One cannot help thinking that there is a certain grandeur in starting one's life that way before the world. I would take a seat, still reeling with the day's sun, full of

white churches and chalky walls, dry countrysides and shaggy olive trees. I would sip at a sweetish barley drink and look at the rolling hills before me. They descended gently to the sea. The evening would turn green. On the largest of the hills the last breeze would turn the wings of a mill. And, by a natural miracle, everyone would lower his voice, so that all that was left was the sky and the singing words rising up to it, which were overheard as if they came from afar. In this brief moment of twilight there reigned something fleeting and melancholy which was perceptible not merely to one man, but to a whole people. As for me, I had a desire to love as one has a desire to weep. It seemed to me that every hour of sleep would henceforth be stolen from life . . . that is, from the time of desire without an object. As during the vibrant hours of the Palma cabaret and the cloister of San Francisco, I was taut and motionless, powerless against that mighty drive which yearned to put the world into my hands.

I know very well that I am wrong—that there are limits to giving oneself. That being the case, one creates. But there are no limits to loving, and what does it matter to me to grasp inadequately if I can embrace everything? There are women in Genoa whose smile I love a whole morning long. I shall never see them again, and doubtless nothing is simpler. But words will not cover the flame of my regret. Little well in the cloister of San Francisco, there I watched flocks of pigeons go by and forgot my thirst. But there always came a moment when my thirst was reborn.

LETTERS FROM JOHN COWPER POWYS TO CLIFFORD TOLCHARD

IT was a warm evening in the early summer of 1942; too warm to start hitch-hiking from Maldon, where I had spent the afternoon, back to my billets in Ongar, without first having some refreshment. I went into a pub, intending to have a quick drink and be on my way in ten minutes: I stayed for over an hour.

There were two other men in the bar; they subsequently turned out to be Mr. Tom Driberg, who was contesting the by-election in Maldon, and Mr. Beckett-Williams, the organist and composer. I had a long talk with the latter, and the outcome was that he gave me the address of Mr. J. C. Powys, whom he knew personally, and advised me to write to him—I had told him of my admiration for this author's work, and also that I did a little writing myself.

I hesitated for a few weeks and then finally did write, very diffidently and carefully, so that he should not feel obliged to enter into a correspondence uninteresting to him. But so courteous and kindly was his reply that I was encouraged to continue writing to him at carefully regulated intervals. That was eight years ago. And our correspondence still continues.

John Cowper Powys's ancestor, the poet, William Cowper, said that letters to a friend should be of the 'true helter-skelter brand'. And this is how Mr. Powys *does* write; with multi-underlinings, dashes, brackets, and even drawings. And it is rare for one of his letters to end conventionally on the last page.

The destruction of a novel referred to in this first letter is of a book I wrote and rewrote three or four times and then burned.

Sunday, July 26th, 1942.

Dear Mr. Tolchard,

Nothing could please me better than your words about Louis Marlow's book (Louis M. Wilkinson's) (for 'Marlow' is his pen-name only) for Louis Wilkinson is the one! as you note and discern.

Heron Ward idealized John and didn't really get Llewelyn's Number and quite got side-tracked by Master T. F.—but I have great respect for Ward and so had Llewelyn . . . only the point is that Louis is a *born* biographer.

My sister in law Alyse Gregory has now got Louis Wilkinson I am glad to say to edit for her a vol. of Llewelyn's letters . . .

I don't at all like to think of your *destroying* a Novel. It is always painful to me to think of manuscripts destroyed. How one of the wickedest biblio-infanticides of this sort was Gogol destroying (*burning*) his sequel, well, his end of Dead Souls that *curious* & *rare masterpiece* which is the favourite book *of all books* of my American friend here: & she has taught me the secret of its peculiar & unique Russian humour.

Yes of course send those Spectators & you'd better *register* them eh? I feel nervous about only copies.

Yrs most sincerely

J. C. POWYS

I sent to Mr. Powys, at his request, three stories that had been published in the *Spectator* and one in MS. As I knew how he disliked short stories and spat them out as it were—'MORCEAUX!' he wrote in one letter, 'how I *hate* them'—I appreciated the more the trouble he took in reading and commenting, too generously, on them.

Aug. 28, 1942.

Dear Mr Tolchard,

I have been reading & indeed 'studying' as carefully as it is possible to me your excellent short stories & sketches. 'The Dole Queue' is very very real and natural because there is no exaggeration in it at all and no carefully worked over poignance. It is just the thing itself—anyone can see that; and feel it as they read it too; you get the exact feeling—I mean *you* the general reader do—that *you*, the writer are describing as what you felt. Then 'Everybody is so kind'. I think this is much more interesting, well, it is to me more interesting any way—because the 'I' of the story is more clearly portrayed as a character with peculiarities of his own though he is still a type and he is a special type too—he is this 3rd generation from my point of view aged 70. Aldous Huxley etc etc wd be the 2nd generation—(Mr Wells etc must count, tho' a bit older as mine) The 2nd generation went in for a savage hit back—their pessimism was *active* pessimism and full of active analysings of the various simple Idealisms (as they thought) & crafty hypocrisies (as they thought) which they were 'counterpointing' & 'barren leafing'

But the 3rd generation is different altogether—and is another turn of the wheel.

He is a reaction from the Aldous Huxley barren leaves; but *not* a return to Mr Wells, still less to Shaw or Chesterton.

If the Wells people were far distance painters & if the Aldous Huxleys were for middle-distance, this 'character' of yours (not necessarily of course yourself) is a foreground person. And I think his desire not to be

crowded & possessed by other figures of the foreground which is of course *inevitably* by far the most *crowded* level or 'line' or 'plane' or 'latitude' or point-appui or degree of distance in this possible picture of all of them—inevitably the most crowded to the particular *type* of nervous egoist who wants most solitude or at least quiet.

'One Room' is my favourite of all. I think it is very *good.* For in this one not only is the hero's character and temper revealed but the surroundings (and especially the Inanimate portions and indeed *portents* are very well described.

My American friend notices a striking resemblance between you and Saroyan. She has read me snatches at different times but I don't care for him myself. In fact to be honest with you I do not *really* get any pleasure or really care for any short things. What I really like are long novels—I like to read them & I like to write them too!

This overpowering tendency among you (Number 3 generation) towards SHORT WORKS and the whole lot of you, my dear Mr Tolchard, do it—I mean show it—is (to me) the most trying and unappealing thing about you! *Morally* I profoundly respect & honour and marvel at you all—because you all have (I know only One single exception & a perfectly horrible 'kid'—*he* was)—a Fascist or Nazi *born.* He was like that awful Captain, on the Franco side, descended from Alva that Virginia Cowles describes in this thrilling book my American friend is reading aloud in snatches to me called 'Looking for Trouble' & (listen Tolchard) don't you think that the job of Newspaper Reporter or Correspondent or whatever they call them suits a certain type among you *generation 3* better than anything else except being an Air-man lets say, but I can't say quite that to you being Signalman.

Think of the reporters of Generation 2 in the last war—what Pessimistic Parti-Pris eh? What grave concentrated aiming at being broad-minded men of the world! God! I could tell you about *them* the generation that might be my son's just as your's might be my grandsons eh!

No, I approve of your generation's perfectly amazing *humility*—humility as an organism of philosophical research, better than any devilish, conceited scientist varmint—see how my hand shakes with fury! humility the greatest of all virtues . . . but my quarrel with you all is an *aesthetic* one, an artistic one—for you *burn your long novels*!! and I cannot *really* enjoy, no no not really & truly, not as a *pleasure* your sketches & articles & short stories & poems. I learn from you all as quick as light . . . in this humility . . . & another thing too . . . I learn from you all in your *spontaneous naturalness*! this suits me down to the ground. Yes it suits grandpapa pantaloon to a T.

Yes, and *my* generation used (in our heavy way) to be like that too. Mr

Wells is still like that. Arnold Bennett always was. But can you imagine anyone of those self conscious, feverish, desperate, conceited, angry, cynical, disillusioned, de-bunkers who are your parents & our sons writing so charmingly & naively and naturally as you do in your note of today???—exactly as I would do myself & have always done—'Joy! Joy! I've just got it' etc. etc. yes and that goodbye in the Café in MS. I think *that* really is far the best of all these 4 Imps of Fame or whatever they are, for there I am reminded—& suppose she could be your grandmamma (& what a lovely one to stay with for a vacation eh?) Guess of whom before you turn this page? of Miss Gertrude Stein. Yes that Saroyan chap & Granny Stein are the influences I note most in these Bubbles or Bagatelles or Dew Drops or whatever you people call them!

No Mr Tolchard my friend I have never heard of C. E. Vulliamy before—but I can assure you that up here in North Wales we resemble the West of Ireland . . . We are *all* descended from Bards & Princes . . . just as they are from Bandits and Kings.

Well I may not get round today or tomorrow, for I am not very quick at getting round, to returning your 3 papers & the 4th but I shall be a bit fussy till you've got them safe back.

Yrs very sincerely,
J. C. POWYS.

We were still arguing about short stories, and I had corrected his underestimation of my age.

Sept. 10. 1942.

. . . I went to Aberystwyth to lecture to his literary class there on King Lear for Prof: Gwyn Jones a great writer of short stories & a lecturer at the University on them—& when he introduced me he said that Theodore's short stories (especially 'The Only Penitent') were as good as any; but that brother John was a shameless & combustible Heretic on the short story—but we remain good, fast & great friends for all this difference of opinion, & so must you & I!

No I wish I *did* know a 2nd hand book shop where there was a 'Wood & Stone' or 'Ducdame' but I don't alas! 2nd hand book shops are the only places to look.

God! Tolchard my friend you do thrill me so with your words about that Glastonbury book. *Damn* my weak & carefu'ly hoarded & yet tired eyes! I *could* write pages to you.

Yes I *did* think you were younger, my dear Sir. No, you belong nearer to my son's generation who is just 40.

O no! I implore you *not* to take my free and easy expression of any prejudice that first comes into my head too seriously—I am a mass of prejudices and most of them are *pure ignorance*. But I think I *am* a born orator

rather than a born writer and I am a long-winded writer and *not* an artist. You have your own art your own fate your own ideas.

No, no I fully see your point about Miniatures etc. etc. and I feel rather ashamed of myself for having launched out so violently on what after all are only my *pure prejudices* & ignorant & reactionary ones too. I confess it, and I beg you, my dear sir, to forgive me. I certainly didn't write to you in the manner (tho' I *talked* about the 3 generations) of an old writer to a young one, but rather as if we were the same age!

Good luck with that sketch of the good-bye in the café—it is v. good.

Yrs most sincerely
J. C. POWYS.

By the time I got the next letter I was in N. Africa. I was enjoying the agreeable experience of watching the growth of a novel which was begun in January 1942 and finished in 1949.

This letter will recall to readers of Mr. Powys's *Autobiography* the section headed 'Southwick' when he was lecturing to girls' schools around Brighton.

Feb. 1st. 1943.

My Dear Tolchard,

No I've got the address safe—its only that I've been hoarding my eyesight for writing pot-boilers to keep up with my family obligations for my funds got alarmingly low & I was scared lest I should have to go round visiting GIRL SCHOOLS in this District of the Midlands & Marches of Wales as I did in Sussex before my first marriage when I'd just left College nearly half a century ago!

God! I used to earn my living by lectures at Girls Schools in a *couple of days* & have all the rest of the time to *write* & what my dear friend did I write in *them days*? Such imitative banal cliché—silly 4th form school boy sentimental stuff as ever you did see! (any 3rd form boy at my school would do 1000 times better today!)

How on earth those Brighton & Hove & Eastbourne school mistresses ever took me on God knows! But once they did I was awfully good at lecturing to girls on English literature.

The truth is I am *not* a born writer and am the opposite of a born scholar but I *am* a born orator & that's the truth. I have never known once what it is to be scared, even in the *faintest degree*, by having to stand on my feet & make a speech . . . & few could say that I fancy; even among great & famous orators.

But its my eyes have had to be hoarded for pot-boilers and *pro-tem* my thousand page Romance about the Dark Ages 480 to 525 A.D. has had to be (aye what a shame!) postponed & laid aside. But I hope to come back to it at least one hour a day in a week or two, when I've finished

for 'Staples & Staples' a little 2/6 paper covered book on Dostoievsky of 40,000 words. After this parallel with my Romance about which like yourself about your long novel I often meditate & ponder on my walks & sitting over my fire when eyes have given out for the day 'My eyes are my fortune sir—he said' & thus I've tended to hoard them up & rather (I am sorry) tended to neglect my friend in the Forces.

I earned six guineas for an article of about six thousand words on 'Finnegans Wake' for Reginald Moore's experimental magazine called (I think) 'Modern Reading' or, perhaps, but I *think* the former it was 'Modern Writing' but whether it has appeared yet I doubt and it may of course have come to grief under the weight of such an *anti-mascot* as your aged friend.

I have just noticed how my handwriting tends to rise to the right. Isn't this a sign of incurable Optimism? I think it is.

We've had the warmest winter (so far—Touch Wood!) that I can recall in my whole life. Every morn before breakfast I walk on an absolutely empty stomach for two hours—thro' the huge larch & fir forests of small trees between Berwyn Range & the Valley of the Dee, Glyn-Dyfrdwy, of which my Owain Glyn-Dwr was lord: and which was harried by Henry V as a boy of 16 long before Agincourt.

Well—to work, to work!

I loved to hear of your French friends & to read your praise of the French.

Yrs as heretofore

JOHN COWPER POWYS.

March 2. 1943

. . . But God! Tolchard my friend I have been hard at it over these *pot-boilers* but now at last I have really brought back on deck out of a deep buried hold my book on the Dark Ages. This thousand pages hist. novel I have been reading for so long & *began* to write on Jan 18th 1942, over a year ago! I've only writ 100 long hand (very long!) pages of it so far—but it thrills me.

I start here in the *prehistoric encampment* on our actual Corwen hills above this little town with a Welsh hero & shall take him to Italy & to Athens by sea as described by St Luke in the 'ACTS'.

My pot-boilers have been a 5000 words article on Finnegans Wake wch took me nearly 2 months, for Reginald Moore, a 40,000 2/6 book on Dostoievsky now being typed for Staples & Staples. Do you know that Publishing House? Then a book which I'll be beginning now & it must be finished by July 1st entitled 'Introducing Rabelais' with Bodley Head & I'm to struggle with the old French till I can produce 15,000 words (in addition to my discourse) of my own translation direct from Rabelais

& more literal than Sir T. Urquhart's which is (as we know) the best translation in the world but the Scotchman really *added* to the text here & there.

All is pretty well with my family & my relatives & friends.

Good luck betide you & yours

Yrs ever

JOHN C. POWYS.

For a writer of his classical style and critical outlook, he has an extraordinary *penchant* for comparatively light fiction and a positive appetite for modern women authors. At this time he conceived an extravagant liking for the books of the French writer Georges Simenon.

June 27. 1943

Dear Tolchard,

. . . Our new favourite writer here is Georges Simenon, a French writer of that rare and admirable form of tale the long short story. Just two stories there are in every volume. And the difference between these and that bête noir of mine the ordinary short story is terrific & absolute.

I seem to think that Henry James has written long-short stories of this length. Anyway I think it is an excellent form of fiction. Simenon's tales (I pray he is alive & will write on & on) have a touch (but its only quite an external touch & not the best part of any of these stories) of the Detective type. Certainly I never thought to live to read 'Detective stories', but the detective element in Simenon's stories is the worst element in them, and as a rule a bit unconvincing . . . but as for the rest . . . the atmosphere and the settings and narrative & the characters are wonderful—they are to me. I haven't come upon an author for years that pleases me so—not I mean with such a lot of books—all equally pleasing.

I say, Tolchard, how quick your letter came, in less than a week.

Well good luck.

Ever yr faithful & recognisant

J. C. POWYS.

And again,

Sept. 1944.

My dear Tolchard,

. . . Listen! Ask your friend of the café you frequent if he has read our present—I speak of P—& myself—our present *favourite* of *all* modern authors, English, American, or French—I refer to the great, the humane, the wise, the noble, the Balzacian & Dostoievskeyan & Dickensian and Rabelaisian and Gorki-ish writer of French Detective stories & creator of the French Sherlock Holmes (only he is *far* superior to him) 'Inspector

Maigret'. I speak of SIMENON. He is not good at all at the detective part of his long-short stories, 2 in each volume—no, his crimes are his weak & clumsy part. But for atmosphere, character, pathos, humour & above all for *Humanity* & knowledge of the pathetic unhappy mass, especially boys, none can touch him, none.

Yrs as ever

JOHN C. POWYS.

Then there was a gap in our correspondence for a little while due to his being ill.

The little book was *Souvenirs de James Joyce* by Phillipe Soupalt, which I bought for him in Algiers.

June 10. 1944.

My Dear Tolchard. here I have got before me balanced on my writing board for I lie on a couch on my back to work so as to better distribute my enemies the gastric acids that my perverse nerves engender—in fact the morbid and mordant offspring of Master Gaster and Miss Nerves. But by taking my mountain walk on an empty stomach & very early—(I fancy earlier than even your Reveille) I can lie on my back for the rest of the day with a free conscience as far as air & exercise and mountainous ascents go, & do my writing so.

But I have to cut down on correspondence alas! for I like it dearly—for the sake of my eyes w^{ch} along with gastric acids are my chief psychic-physical concern—but, thanks be to all the Powers I am getting on not only far better than I deserve but ever so much better than I sometimes have expected.

How can I thank you enough my dear Clifford for this thrilling book about Joyce especially about 'Finnegans Wake' which I like 20 times better than 'Ulysses' tho' I understand it 20 times less well! I think it is *far* superior; and shows a much wiser mellower kindlier more friendly & genial mood.

I wish I'd had this excellent French point of view before on this topic. Well, thanks to you I have it now anyway.

I do so enjoy and so does my friend P– your descriptive letters on gardens and fountains & children playing in them.

But I do not think you need worry *one bit* about not having time or the urge to write for it is clear you are absorbing impressions fast fast fast all the time & I doubt if we can ever do both at the same time. But the time will come—you'll see & so will we.

Well, I must stop. Good luck be to you with you & *around* you (for others to share)

Yrs as ever

JOHN C. POWYS.

With the next letter, I was back in England. The first paragraph refers to some remarks I had written about the character of Dud No-Man in the novel *Maiden-Castle*.

I have had a fairly wide experience of bed-sitting rooms, and I judged that Mr. Powys had, too, from his photographic description of Dud No-Man's behaviour among his cups and saucers in *his* bed-sitting room.

May 20. 1946.

My Dear Friend.

I'm *so* extra delighted with your praise of ponderous gravity of my 'alter-ego' No-Man's way of laying his breakfast and with your recognition of your own memories of your private little ritualistic joys & pleasures so deep—aye, aye deepest almost I daresay for both of us of nearly all the sensations of life.

Well my historic romance or novel of Corwen in 499 A.D. has got on to my own secret pleasure in it to page 1055 in my long hand scrawl. But it goes very very slowly now purely due to my illness & to actual vomiting retching & twisting about as my ulcer hurts or I struggle with nausea caused by excess of certain devil's own acids. I cannot see anybody these days for the nervous excitement creates these acids as they have done all my life since I left school because of this 'dyspepsia' as I used to call it in my boyhood when I dosed myself with Beechams Pills.

I had a very bad time with these acids & a fit of retching that went on & on & on last night but I forced myself to dress & walk up our lane for an hour this morn from 8 A.M. to 9 A.M. but I am still ill, still ill.

I write only postcards now even to my oldest friends but your praise was so sweet that I couldn't resist telling you so & enclosing this latest photo outside our 'Jerry' built, but very well Jerry built little house; just the sort I have always preferred to big stone ones.

Yrs as heretofore my friend.

JOHN COWPER POWYS.

Oct 22. 1946

. . . You ask about my novel. Well! I had at the start the idea of taking my hero to Rome & Ravenna if not to Constantinople & Athens. But since I've reached (in my big scrawling sprawling long hand, though of course you must remember) Page 1390 already and have only got through *3 days*!!

I see I shall have to end without even leaving home, far less getting a ship for Piraeus, tho' I've got a Greek captain on a ship ready to sail & I've got an elderly much travelled scholar and collector of MSS & of whatever monastery-bound & copied classics were to be found then, who receives letters from France & Italy & Athens from Sidonius and Cassiodonus and Damascus of those three centres of civilization and from the

young Boethius in Rome. But I am so thrilled, my friend, with this romance of the 'dark ages' which are the ages *very* well suited to my particular turn of mind. And I like Corwen in October of 499 A.D. so well that I go very slow in time because I enjoy every moment as I write of every thoughts, gestures feelings in such a horde of people jostling together.

Do you know Clifford Tolchard my dear friend I am now *tonight* when I do this note up to you going to write of Oct 22 in 499 A.D. instead of Oct 22 in 1946! Isn't that a coincidence of a curious kind?

But when the hell the publishers are going to bring out my long Rabelais & short Dostoievsky heaven *may* know but I doubt it.

P– & I are both fascinated by, & very very absorbed in this photo of yours. O no I *like* the eyes cast down like that it makes the disillusioned eyelids so fascinatingly equivocal & subtle. We can see that the corners of your mouth go up not down; and we can talk of your great forehead as Coleridge said he did to Hazlitt!

Write again after a while my friend please. I have only one working eye now—the other is quite *blind* (with cataract) so I have to save my one Cyclop's eye for my novel but I love to hear from you & P & I talk often of you.

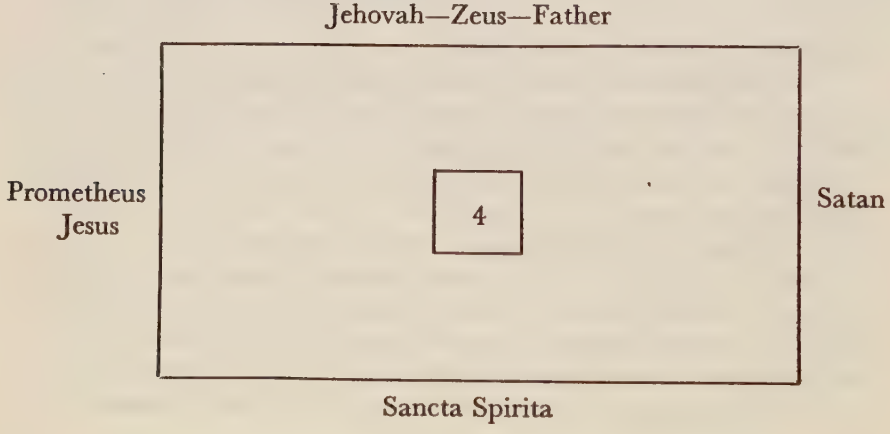
We too love Llewelyn's letters, perhaps best of *all* his works.

Yr friend as ever

J. C. POWYS.

Sept. 1. 1948.

Autumn! Hurrah! I love the Autumn . . . My mother's birthday was & is the eleventh of Sept & 11 is the nicest and far my favourite of *all Numbers* after the number 4 which is the Pythagorean number & what old Walt called the square Deific.



(think of Whitman's audacity in making the Holy Ghost *Feminine*)

But I put 11 second and all Numerologists go by *addition* in these things & 1+1=2!! another, in fact the 1st of *Even* numbers.

Please salute most respectfully & gratefully your beautiful lady from yr ancient Prester John & tell her her appreciation makes me proud & not only proud, for it makes me resolve to invent, imagine, enlarge on, & deepen, better still & still & still & still the last chapters of 'Porius'. A Romance of the Dark Ages (I really must curb my obsessed compulsion for 4 & my obsessed revulsion from 3 (the 3 claws of the great Triune Absolute Cuttle Fish) for it grows absurd when I can't even say to my friend Clifford T that I am resolved (because of this sweet girl's good word) that I'm going to do better still without saying still still still still!

But my dear friend I am so thrilled that you are pondering the grand impulse to Write once more your own self. Go ahead! go ahead! Shall I add a 4th Go Ahead!

With all the Best Magic for your writing. Both P– & I feel *certain* that you will succeed. We both have a strong *Hunch* to that effect.

Your old friend.
J. C. P.

In the early part of 1949 he wrote that his long historical novel was finished. He was apprehensive of the publisher's reactions to its length.

And finally this last letter of thanks for L. A. G. Strong's *The Sacred River*, which I had sent him for Christmas. I had arranged to go and visit him a few weeks before but I was put off by the weather as I had intended to hitch-hike.

Dec 22. 1949.

My dear Friend.

You really are an angel to go & spend 10/- ten bob! on (God! what a lot!) on this present to your old friend John & your other loyal fan P– for I tell you—but you know that already—there is none, I say *none*! of our younger literary cronies that we feel the same about or that hold the same place in those questionable crucibles or urns or vases or what do you call those things in churchyards?—I forget—O yes sarcophagi! those crazy & cracked receptacles anyway that your old John & his P– call their hearts than does C. T.

How sweet it was of your dear wife to write & tell us when you couldn't plunge into that fog—& it was well you didn't, Tolchard—however sad for us—for it was worse as the day went on here. We'd have been fair scared to think of our soldier lost on the march.

But my instinctive compass needle of an author's vain combatitiveness (how the hell do you put the vowels there & are they both 'i's'?)—but

never mind say cantankerousness instead—soon found out where Master Strong the Irishman differs from Master J. C. P. the Welshman re James J. Tis a *deep prejudice* with me my quarrel with the *unconscious* & I am still, I wont say cocksure but Badger-sure or Fox-sure or even Lobworm-sure that its from *Vico's* ideas & not *Freud's* that Joyce's genius got its best inspiration. And this I would say in *spite of Joyce his wone self*; for Cervantes isn't the only great genius whose Book got out of hand & left his plan behind.

Yes, you have given us both a real heavenly argumentative thrill with this book of Strong's. And we never knew it existed. But think of you being so generous, Clifford. God! you beat *me* but old men are *misers*.

Yrs as ever
JOHN.

* * *

This correspondence has been to me what the letters of Delius must have been to the young Phillip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) or Llewelyn Powys's letters to Kenneth Hopkins. There has never been any hint of impatience, only great courtesy and encouragement. He made me feel that I was *important*. And during some of the dreary days of war abroad, a letter from him had the power to uplift me for a week at a time. He *gave* me a particular private life of my own: 'Imagine yourself what you want to be,' he wrote. 'Tell yourself stories about it.'

'What letters you can write!' Llewelyn wrote to him in 1926. Llewelyn who was closer to John Cowper than any other member of this large family and who sums up my feelings perfectly in this extract from *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*: 'Have not I for a quarter of a century followed in the wake of John Cowper? All that I am I owe to him. Like a sagacious Sancho Panza, I have ever kept close behind his great mediaeval wain full of the foison of I know not what rich harvest-field. And whatever out of its largess his ample waggon gave to the wayside hedge, that I have had the wit to garner and, with the panniers of my Dapple well stuffed, to carry shrewdly off to the nearest market . . . he alone has undisputed access to those deep, cool wells where the gods themselves let down their buckets.'

TRUE STORY

GILBERT PHELPS

I

Our story's like a book in which
        time yellowing page
and the indecipherable print enrich
an imagined theme, but scarce engage
the truth—that vex and taunt the heart
with surmise and a half-guessed plot;
the fluted capitals impart
truth's modicum—the bulk's forgot,
—that patient work of hand and head.
Interpreter hope invents the rest,
and takes the intervals as read,
—well trained to skip, compress, digest,
to turn the preface inside out,
and wield the index like a flail,
as if a fish were turned about,
manipulated by his tail.
The chapter headings rashly hint
the plot's intent, but cannot mend
a ravaged page, or failing print,
        but merely send
fragmentary forebodings of the end.

II

        When a man tells his tale
        then there's no more truth,
not truth, that is, that's tangible,
fingering link by link its chain,
and its necessity's the mother of lies,
not imagination a bold innovator,
for we cannot brook long silences,
and the intervals must be filled with noises
or the dry tick of rumination:
        for time past's a sea where float
        a few hard-headed islands,
and a few volcanic peaks protrude
        their irrepressible fingers;
but the spaces, the vast interstices,
are filled with the fluid of utter forgetfulness,
        or a jelly of mere conjecture.

III

It is only our conceit
that apprehends the images of a solid
and a strict progression,
the autobiography that began with a birth,
and knew when it caught the tide
(and what tide, and only one
unmistakable tide!),
that moved with foreordained precision
from chapter one to two,
giving to each incident no more importance
than the propriety of the whole allowed—
though it's only the incidents you really remember,
(like the horse, and the fence, and the tree
that flashed past your carriage window,
and studded the shuffling belt of your dreams).

It is only your hope,
your frightened determination
to leave nothing unrelated,
that drives you to build an imaginary highway,
pave with 'now', and 'then', and 'the next',
that rings in a deepening tread
from the toddler's sandals,
on to the grave, and over-confident, boot.

But discount that sly and secret padding
of your wilful, erratic memory,
that frantic earthing up
of the sagged wire netting,
with its few staunch staples
—and what's your holding?
A flash here, and there, and a splutter,
like a child that falls in the snow,
and scatters, higgledy-piggledy
a handful of bright new pennies.

For we jump in terrified leaps
from hump-backed stone to stone,
and that's our progress:
our tale's a tugging harbour line,
where in the bucking, struggling buoys
(so beautiful in red, and white, and blue!)
is the only resting place of 'then' and 'when'.

IV

Be honest
when you tell your tale—
'born such and such a year'—
that's stale!
'The steps in my career were such . . .'
—so you assert—
but fact—how much?

'I can remember how love grew . . .'
but did you notch
its trunk that true?
Or 'thus we slowly ebbed apart' . . .
but can the living pulse foretell
the slow gradations of the heart?

No, you remember somebody's smile,
a corner in light
an inch of the stile,
a square foot or so of the wall—
your pattern's not here!
Is it anywhere at all?

V

Awake, we're the real sleepers, and our dreams
are filled with the inexhaustible subterfuges
of frightened minds that link the occasional gleams
of an irrational sun into days and weeks in a system,
and the random flashes of real experience, the brief
gaping and basking at the mouth of the cave
in the poignant glare before the fall of the leaf
cannot vindicate a confident history
compiled in the gloom of our hibernation—
behind the incalculable sun lies the real mystery,
indifferent to our present methods of computation.

VI

Once more, then, be honest
when you try to piece the broken letters—
momentarily pause with the brush between your teeth,
pause to reflect,
are you sure that the dead
(but by no means indifferent) printer
mightn't have made
a very different reconstruction?

IMAGES OF HOME

STEPHEN SPENDER

WE lived at Sheringham in Norfolk where we had a house at the extreme edge of the town on the cliffs and adjoining fields. My childhood was the nature I remember; the thickness of the grass in the pasture fields, amongst whose roots were to be found heartsease, the small pansies which are the colour of the iris in a golden eye, speedwell of a blue as intense as a bead of sky. There were scabious and cornflower, and waving grasses and bracken which came as high as my shoulders.

Sometimes, stuck as though glued to the stem of a flower, just below the cup of the petals, there was a chalk-blue butterfly—milky blue its spread open wings; and pale russet chalky colour the underwing, with small copper rings and spots as though stamped on to them by a minute hammer. In the sun the butterflies expanded and then shut close their wings with the exact movement of a hinge. When the hinge was shut, the closed wings were of a knife-blade thickness, so that you could not have split them open with the edge of a razor.

In the garden I would lose myself in a forest of hollyhocks. The scent of a rose was the atmosphere of a whole world in which I could lose myself, as though, when I buried my nose in the petals, the day was instantly canopied with a red sky.

Near Sheringham there were woods and the common, covered with gorse and heather. In the woods at spring there were the pale, damp primroses with their scent like sublimated mould and a buttery thickness which one could almost taste. Then in summer there was the heather, brittle flowers like tiny purple beads on gnarled charcoal stems, flooding over the burnt-looking soil, on which bees descended in thousands to lift away the honey. Beyond the heather, near blackberry hedges, the gorse lay like gold armour on bushes of spiky green thorns. At evening, floating above the flat Norfolk landscape, there appeared range upon range of mountains with gulfs and valleys between high peaks, which stayed motionless, sculptured on the sky out of clouds. Sometimes, also, at midday in the sky, whose blue was as solid and opaque as the flushed green of a field of young corn, perfect white pictures would appear, as on a screen. 'Look, a milk jug, a white milk jug. It is exactly a milk jug,' I would cry. 'No, silly,' my sister would say, 'It is a cat, a white cat, can't you see?'

In autumn and winter the high winds, which had caused the branches of

the stunted hedges to bend all in one direction, blew across the cliff-edge fields between Sheringham and East Runton. One day the wind was so strong that I could lean against it; like an invisible door in a wall of air, it would yield slightly if I pushed it, and then spring back against me. Then I started singing into the wind. Then I stopped singing, and I heard a very pure sound of choral voices answering me out of the blowing sky. It was the angels.

My father would take my sister and me to Miss Harcourt's school at East Runton. On the way he would tell us stories. There was the story of the Rubber Man who could climb any building and stretch his neck to see over any wall. This I liked even more than the ones about the parrot my father owned when he was a boy.

At Miss Harcourt's there was a girl called Penelope, with whom, at the age of seven, I was in love. There was also a boy called Forbes, with whom I used to fight. Forbes had black, wiry hair and flashing black eyes behind his steel-rimmed spectacles. One day when we were rolling over one another on the ground, he got into a passionate rage of the kind known only to a small child when his mind becomes a weighing scale in which he measures the whole of his strength against the whole of his weakness. The will of Forbes was breaking against my body as though against a gate. Suddenly afraid, I lay on top of him and held him very closely in my arms, and at that moment I experienced a sensation like the taste of a strong and sweet honey, but not upon my tongue, and spreading wave upon wave, throughout my whole body.

Sometimes, when I sat indoors in the kindergarten on a very fine day, I felt as though a wall had been raised between me and the outside nature to which I belonged. I had a sensation of the garden, which I could just see through a window, twisted through with bird song as with forking flame, and of the limbs of trees running like veins through the sky, which poured down on the earth in an enormous cataract of blue light.

Then, after the end of the class, I would run out into the garden to a place where there was a pond, and, lying on the ground beside it, stare down into that strange life in rust-coloured water where stagnating processes had furred the concrete sides of the pond and even the grass leaves of motionless subaqueous weeds. I soon observed that activity which as little disturbed the gelatinous stillness of the pond as a fly or a leaf fossilised thousands of years ago disturbs the amber in which it is enclosed. Newts moved along the pond-floor and little water boatmen with their tiny jerking oars cut their courses up and down and across the pond, as sharp as needles through the water, and as straight as ruled lines. Slow beetles stirred, and the snails, clinging to the water plants with their mouths, moved a few centimetres up a stalk like a sheep nibbling its way to another pasturage.

The life of the pond was like a theatre whose surface was the front of the stage; and peering down upon this stage, I saw naked dramas, glutinous loves, voracious murders, incredibly fertile births, taking place in the utter stillness and unnatural light.

All this was during the First World War. One day, while we were in the garden at Sheringham, an enormous, cleanly-shaped monster, with smoothly roaring propellers paddling in the evening light, glided quite slowly over the roof of our house. My father's secretary, Captain Devoto, ran out of the house and said: 'A Zeppelin'. I remember the winter evenings, with the curtains drawn, and spread round the table the paint-boxes and paper which could bring an exciting world of images into being. On one such evening, while my mother was painting a poster, she stopped working, sighed deeply and said: 'This terrible war'. That remark provoked me to repeat what I had read in a history book: 'The most terrible war in history was the one in which Joan of Arc fought against the English at Orleans.' 'This is the most cruel, horrible war that has ever been!' she exclaimed harshly.

When I was nine, I took one of the most important decisions of my life. I decided to go to boarding school.

My brother Michael was a boarder at the preparatory school, the Old School House, of Gresham's School, Holt. During the Christmas holidays, he came home in grey flannel trousers and a blazer with two interlinked shields embroidered over the breast pocket. He looked almost like a young naval cadet, and talked about the examinations in which he had distinguished himself, the extraordinary skill required to drive a motor car, and the components of water.

I felt that if only I went to boarding school, wore a uniform, and had my hair close cropped like Michael's, I would become sure and efficient like him. My parents looked at Michael and looked at me, and agreed that such a change was desirable. Perhaps if I went to school, I would stand up straight, stop being so flabby, and learn to pronounce words correctly, not confusing, for example, 'soldier' and 'shoulder'. (Perhaps this mistake had some connection with my frequently being told to hold my shoulders straight, like a soldier.)

So I packed off my caterpillars in a box almost as big as the trunk in which my clothes were put, and went to Holt.

My first impression was of a large, grey playing field, round which boys tramped in pairs. Being new, I had no one to tramp with so I went round looking for Michael. Michael kindly but firmly explained that I must not be seen with him, nor must I call him Michael now, but Spender Major. However, Michael said, his friend Hales Major had a brother, Hales Minor, almost as incompetent as me, and perhaps we might make friends. Accordingly, Michael took me along to see Hales Major who was in the

school dining-room and assembly hall, playing the 'Death March of Saul', on a rickety upright piano. When he saw me, Hales Major got up, shut the lid of the piano, and looked at me keenly. He was a pleasant-looking boy with an oval face, dark eyes, and hair done rather eccentrically, with a fringe. He just stared at me and laughed and laughed. 'You don't mean to say so,' he exclaimed between laughs. 'So this is Spender Minor.'

The experience which divides my life at the age of nine from all that comes before and which came afterwards was the shock of homesickness when I arrived at school. This homesickness took a double form. On the one hand, it was a violent rejection by my senses of everything around me. My palate refused to taste food; my eyes loathed everything they saw. To hear or to feel anything connected with the school was a kind of sick-room duty interrupting my desire to think my own thoughts and be alone. On the other hand, my mind was filled with the overpowering images of home. If I closed my eyes for an instant, there was not a single scene I imagined at home (and I could not stop myself imagining!) which did not overpower me with nostalgia. A corner of the scullery, a maid scrubbing the floor, a sign in the road below my window, creaking in the wind at night: just such irrelevant things provided me with the question I was for ever asking myself: How could I for a single moment ever have imagined that I was unhappy at home and that I wanted to leave?

Each morning, after dreaming of home, I would wake up and, for a moment, imagine that I was in my own room. Then I opened my eyes wide and the window of the dormitory was not that of my room at home. This was the worst moment of the day.

Occasionally people who were sorry for me told me that the term was only ninety-one days. They might as well have told me it was only eternity. For in that hell which childhood can be, a single day can seem unending.

The headmaster, not just of the junior school, but of the whole of Gresham's School, was Howson, the great Howson, always known as Howson of Holt. He certainly transformed Gresham's School from a grammar school into the great Public School which it now is. But it was not this aspect of him with which I came in contact, and I must describe our meeting in the way in which it impressed itself on me.

Early in the term, the little new boys from the preparatory school had to go up to the main school buildings and meet Howson. We bicycled the mile or so which divided the main from the junior school. Then we were shown into a class-room where our little group of the smallest boys in the whole school—none of us was older than ten—sat and waited for Howson. The headmaster came in. As far as I remember, he had a rotund face with a purplish complexion, and he was rather short. He sat down and said to the boy nearest to him from where he faced us: 'How did you get here?'

'We came on our bikes,' said the boy, whose name was Seyd.

'Sir, sir! and there's no such word as bike!' roared the headmaster.

'Yes, sir,' said Seyd.

'What do you say? What do you say?'

'Bicycles. We came on our bicycles.'

'BICYCLES, SIR!'

Howson now seemed to enter a mighty passage of his nature, like an entrance of the whole orchestra at the end of a fugal introduction, while he explained to us what our generation was doing to the English language.

When this was over, there were a couple of bars of silence, and then Howson took up another great theme, characteristic of him, I suppose, in its bare simplicity. 'Hands up those of you who are *only* children, without brothers or sisters.'

Two or three boys put up their hands. The headmaster then said that the only child was a miserable, pitiable creature, born of selfish parents, unlikely to play the game.

This was one of the very rare occasions in my school career in which I happened to be on the right side. But just as I was savouring the sweet injustice of being favoured, another question was fired at us: 'Hands up, those who have never been beaten by their fathers.'

Two or three, of whom I was one, put up their hands.

The headmaster let himself go. Fathers who did not beat their children, he said, were not men. Children who were not beaten by their fathers would not be men. Beating was the best treatment a boy could receive.

At this moment I noticed hanging on a coat-hook on the class-room door two canes. I felt faint and forgot the rest of the great man's words.

During this, my first term, I became involved in a terrible row in which I was outlawed from school discipline.

What happened was this. At 11 a.m. each morning, plates of bread, cut into pieces of a quarter of a slice each, were put on tables during the break. Each boy was allowed to eat one quarter of a slice, and no more. Certain of the older boys from the Old School House used to go up to the senior school for classes, and they arrived rather later than the rest of us for break and their bread. One day five or six of the smaller boys were particularly hungry, and ate more than one of the quarter slices of bread. The result was that, when the older boys arrived, there was not enough bread to go round among them. They complained to the kitchen-maids who defended their mathematics, and it became obvious that some of us had taken more than one piece of bread.

The whole junior school was now assembled together and the housemaster, Dr. Wynne Wilson, related to many bishops and an authority on divinity and bicycling, called upon the boys who had eaten more than one quarter slice of bread to put up their hands. This we all did. Then, addressing the rest of the school, Wynne Wilson said we were worse than Huns; we

were food hogs. We were so wicked that he himself could not punish us. So he gave the other boys leave to do whatever they liked with us. We were outlawed for that afternoon.

I did not observe what happened to the others, because several boys set on me. They had found some rope which they tied round my hands and feet, and then they pulled at the ends in different directions. After this I was flung down a hole at the back of the platform of the schoool dining-room which was called the Kipper Hole, because heads of kippers were thrown there.

Curiously enough, my chief preoccupation during all this time was whether I would get to my music-lesson in time. The school had impressed on me strongly that salvation lay in obeying rules, conforming and being inconspicuous.

Finally, I tore myself away from my attackers and got on to my bicycle. I arrived in a sad state at the house of the music master, Mr. Greatorex.

His reaction astonished me. I sat at the keyboard and tried to play. All I hoped was that somehow I would get through my lesson without disgracing myself. Suddenly, without saying a word, Greatorex put his arm round my shoulders. He did not speak for some time, then he said: 'Tell me what is the matter.'

When he had heard my story, Greatorex did not take sides for or against me. He said quietly: 'Listen. You are unhappy now, and you may as well realise that you will be unhappy for a long time, perhaps throughout all your time at school. But I can assure you that a time will come, when you have left school perhaps, and are about to go to the University, when you will begin to be happy. And then the others will feel less happy. You will be happier than most people.'

I never forgot Greatorex's remark, slipped like a banned letter into the Concentration Camp of my childhood; and when I was grown up, I wrote and thanked him for having made it, and confirmed that it was true.

. . . And now in the burning room, which was like the blazing gorse at Sheringham, I thought there had never been a situation in my grown-up life which seemed as bad as certain situations at school. And I remembered that before my mother went in to have the operation that was fatal to her, she said to Ella, who was lighting her bedroom fire: 'Tell them I have had a very happy life.'

THE FAIRY-TALE AS TEACHER

P. L. TRAVERS

THE word 'fairy-tale', because it has so often been misused, is nowadays a little misleading. Yet it is impossible to dispense with it or to think of a better. For one thing, it is an irrevocable part of our tradition and, for another, so inclusive. On fairy-tale's broad hearth there is room for all her children—myth, folk-tale, legend, saga—to say nothing of her mighty old pythoness of a mother, religion. This is a formidable family and it may be that the lapse of the fairy-tale in modern life is due to the fact that nobody wants to face up to such a bunch of Fates. I have heard parents declare that they did not want their children to read the tales for fear they should grow up into wishful thinkers. Perhaps in a more candid moment they might rather have said that they felt inadequate to bring up children who were free to devour what is, in essence, dynamite. Not that the fairy-tale can hurt anyone; but it can set up a chain of questions that will only take truth for an answer. One can hardly imagine a process less encouraging to wishful thinking!

It would be foolish to deny that the fairy-tale is, indeed, a diversion for the young. But diversion is only half of it. The other half is concerned with the nature of the world and man's relation to it. In these matters none of us is too old to be involved. Fairy-tale is at once the pattern of man and the chart for his journey. Each of the stories unwinds from its core the navel-string of an eternal idea. Choose at random from the simple, most familiar bed-time tales, say, *Hansel and Gretel*. How it beguiles the child with its lollipop house and the peppermint doorstep! For *us*, however, this is only the lure. The trap, the real secret, is the journey through the wood. If you want to find your way home, it says (back to beginnings, becoming as little children), you must scatter something less ephemeral than peas or rose-leaves. Birds will eat one, and the wind blow the other away. Only by marking the path with pebbles—enduring, hardly found, indestructible—can you pick up the trail and escape the witch's oven, which is extinction.

Take *One-Eye, Two-Eyes and Three-Eyes*. Their mother loved One-Eye and Three-Eyes—they were so unique and rare. Two-Eyes was just like everyone else, so she had to fend for herself. Yet it was for Two-Eyes that the fairy feast was spread; Two-Eyes alone who could pluck the gold-and-silver fruit, and Two-Eyes, also, whom the Prince so conventionally fancied. Away with oddity, cries the story's inner voice. Subhuman and

superhuman are both monstrosities. Only the completely normal has a chance to escape from daily bondage and eat the spirit's food.

And what of the *Sleeping Beauty*? Was it wishful thinking, do you think, that broke the spell at last? The story wraps, as in a silk cocoon, an austere admonition. Man, it reminds us, must set a part of himself aside constantly to watch, to cut through the automatically growing forest of his habitual nature so that again and again it may wake the sleeping part. But more than one seed is loosened when you shake the stem of this flowery story. First, eternal vigilance; next, the insistence that Love alone can cut through the tangled thicket; thirdly, it suggests that, while Beauty is the heroine, the Wicked Godmother is the chief character. If she had not waved her wand and cried 'Sleep!', how could the arduous business of waking have been set in motion? Hidden things, in ancient writings, are often manifested by means of their opposites; and here the story seems to hint that devils, as well as angels, bless us; that enemies may be as useful as friends.

This is only one of the many fairy-tale warnings against sleep. Wizards doze, while their old mothers pluck the three golden hairs that are all their store of wisdom. Giants lie down and sleep and their hearts are stolen away. While the hare takes his siesta, the tortoise wins the race. The two elder brothers snore at the crossroads while the youngest passes them by and arrives first at the king's palace.

The theme of these Three Brothers bound on a single quest continually recurs. Taken literally, they can be considered as separate entities—Prince Tom, Prince Dick, and Prince Harry. But they can also be regarded as a triple whole, a composite picture of man's inner self. As the first brother, he lives solely by instinct; in the second stage he feels the need for something more but cannot find his direction; only the third brother, grown young in acceptance and submission, unashamed to cry Help! to the humblest creature, can claim the bright Princess. The fairy-tales are like water-flowers; they lie so lightly on the surface. But their roots go down deep into a dark and ancient past. They are, in fact, a remnant of that Orphic art whose function it was to instruct the generations in the inner meanings of things. They were not intended to be literature, as such, though the fact that they have, as a by-product, a high literary value, is an indication of their Orphic origin. They are a natural growth, not so much inventions as extensions of general experience; objective statements in words as the Sphinx, for instance, is an objective statement in stone. And it must be remembered that they were intended for the ear rather than the eye for the listeners. Listening is the first lesson to be learned from the fairy-tales, as it is from religion—listening that is attention, and inner watching and remembering. While they were still communicated by word of mouth, they came down the generations without distortion. Nowadays

it is the reading public that is responsible for the garbled versions. For the eye is less dependable than the ear; it has not the gift of echoes. Those who have heard the fairy-tales have a very different understanding of what they hear from those who have only read them. As a child listens, the story goes in simply as story. But there is an ear behind the ear which conserves meaning and gives it out much later. It is then that the listener, if he is lucky, understands the nature of the dragon, the necessity for the hero's labours and *who* it is that lives happily ever after.

Luck is an important element in the tales, but they have no truck with wishing. Without luck, you could push a rich man through the eye of a needle sooner than measure up to their requirements. The price of an eye, which Odin willingly paid to Mimir in return for the gifts of memory and premonition, was a cut price. He got a bargain and he knew it. In that world nothing is given for nothing and wishing takes you nowhere. Look what happened to Dame Isobel when she became involved with the Flounder! There is no easy way out in the fairy-tale. The characters must jump through every hoop. Princes are sent not merely to the end of the world—but beyond. But how is that achieved? When you have got to the end of the world, what beyond is there? Inwards, answers the hero, as he turns in his tracks. Only in this direction can he continue his quest. And this he must do for a traditional fairy-tale term—for ever and a day. Here, as with beyond, it is the day that contains the secret. For ever is Time. But the day is Time turning upon itself; it is every moment, the Now that goes in and out with breath, the ultimate ever—Eternity. Not once, and good riddance, must the dragon be slain, but always, second by second. One can think of easier ways of thinking in wishes!

Again like flowers, the same fairy-tales spring up in different countries, always with the lineaments of first cousins and always alongside the parables of truth that make the religions of man. Like village schoolmasters, they instruct the simple, while the high-priests deal with the scholars. But essentially both are concerned with the same teaching. How to live and how to die is the subject of Orphic art, no matter what guises it wears. In effect, this is a single process, for to learn one is to understand the other. And this ancient knowledge, if we but realised it, is continually available. Under all things it lies, the foundation of wisdom. It is as though somewhere in the universe there were a steady lighthouse, a bright wheel turning, whose spokes of light fall now here, now there, upon the troubled seas. George Chapman (Homer's Chapman) might well have imagined a similar cosmic phenomenon, such a limitless light-giver, when he wrote:

> 'Terror of darkness! O thou king of flames
> That with thy music-footed horse dost strike
> The clear light out of crystal on dark earth,
> And hurl'st instructive fire about the world.'

Instructive fire! This, surely, this effluent and ceaseless light, is what man hankers for when he thinks of the Golden Age. Not lost time perfected, nor Eden silted over, but this old knowledge that knocks at his inner ear and makes him long for something he does not know he knows. Hurled about the world we can see its action over the centuries and where it fell upon good ground. This fire was Lao Tse's candle. By its light he formulated his Wordless Doctrine which can never really be told, any more than Buddha's Flower Sermon. Fairy-tale took him, too, by the hand, forestalling him, when he was about to die, by setting him on a buffalo and taking him off to Heaven. There he goes, the Old One, for ever riding up the sky on his rugged steed; reposeful, neither surprised nor pleased; and ceremoniously bowing, perhaps, to Elijah on his cloud.

Again, in India, a fire-bolt fell and brought to light the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Buddhist legends, the Panchatantra stories, and that great well-spring of fairy-tale, the confluence of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. This latter pair tell the truths with minstrel voices, decking them out in the most sylvan beauty. Animals and men are complete entities; the forests themselves are living beings. In all fairy-tale where will you find such a figure as Hanuman, such an apotheosis of simplicity and self-surrender as that noble monkey in his rôle of servant to Rama (Vishnu)? Only the instructive fire could have bracketed so significantly the impulsive ape and the eternal preserver.

In Krishna and the Pandav brothers—silver-helmed Arjuna and tiger-waisted Bhima (Tiger-waisted! Homer had nothing better!) the fairy-tale concentrates the essence of the *Mahabharata*. But the lesser jewels are almost as beautiful—Nala and Damayanti, for instance, and Savitri and Satyavan. Here, in these Indian legends, we find the source that eventually fed the springs of all the *Märchen* of Europe, Scandinavia and Russia. But we are not to be blamed for knowing so little of our fairy-tale origins; for it is not for much more than a hundred years that the West has had general direct access to the wisdom of the East and the Near East. Did Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm realise, I wonder, that every one of their legendary princes has as his hidden name Rama or Arjuna? Or that Ahmed and Mustapha, from the *Arabian Nights*, mingle their dark locks with the flaxen curls of Western heroes? For the *Thousand and One* also derived their heritage from India, though only in part. The other branch of the family came from Persia. There, the instructive fire fell upon the Sufi poets. In the *Mathanawi* of Jalalu'ddin Rumi, a brimming cup of parable and story, you may find many a brotherly likeness to the tales of Scherezade and those we tell our own children at bed-time.

Inevitably, if we go looking for roots, the tracks lead eastwards. The sun of wisdom, like the sun of light, has its rising there. But luckily for us the movement of both is in a westerly direction. As they journey westwards,

they adapt the riches they bring with them to each place and age. In the largest sense, therefore, we too have our fairy-tales and allegories and parables that are peculiarly our own. The American Indians have a mine of legend so profuse and varied that it will take generations to collect and digest it. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* comes into my category—not for the story only but also for the grand simplicity of the writing. The architecture and resonance of the telling are an intrinsic part of its allegory. And think of Blake and his Arabesque inventions—angels, demons, children on clouds, and all the world of spirits. The whole body of his work is fairy-tale, a strong, pliant net set by a cunning fowler to catch the truth.

And still, though we heed it less and less, the wheel turns and the light falls. Never was the instructive fire more needed than it is today. And, as though need, by some universal law, brought forth its own fulfilment, we have a portion of the instructive fire at hand. *All and Everything*[1] by G. I. Gurdjieff seems to me to come under that heading, since its object is to tell man, by means of fairy-tale, parable—call it what you will—the truth about himself. Perhaps I should say re-tell, for it gathers up from the past stray strands of knowledge and plaits them into a powerful web of contemporary exposition. This is a strange, exciting, disturbing book, unique of its kind; occasionally shot through with poetry, continually provocative; alive as a live wire is alive and capable of giving shocks of a very high voltage. Properly to experience it, one must go to it naked, shorn of all preconceived notions of what a book should be. It is a new sort of book. Its difference from other books is in kind, not degree, in the same sense as a camel is different from an ostrich.

Intimately relating opposites to one another (as the fairy-tale never fails to do), this story purports to be told by Beelzebub to his grandson Hassein, a child of twelve years, as they sail through the universe from planet to planet. And the subject of his discourse is the race of 'three-brained beings' who inhabit the planet Earth. Seated in their space-ship, the storyteller, the child and their old servant—the intellectual, emotional and instinctive elements—brood like three Fates upon the race of men. The contrast between the moving ship—a new version of the magic carpet?—and the stillness of those three figures is effectively achieved and very moving. Motionless, wrapped in their tails, their horned heads bowed upon their palms, they seem to gaze with impersonal pity upon the creatures of earth. Here is a fairy-tale for our own time, a piece of objective writing that we cannot read without in some sense experiencing it. The symbolism is accessible to anybody who really wants to understand it and if there are no palpable dragons, there are invisible terrors enough to set the doughtiest hero trembling. Properly to appreciate this story, one must first hear it read aloud. Only so, I found, can one clarify for oneself the involved rhythms of the writing, and catch, behind the deliberately invented nouns and verbs,

[1]Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30/-

their inner meaning ringing. It is necessary, too, for the understanding of the book—the Zen stories make the same demand—to jettison the usual interpretations of certain words and phrases. Anyone used to thinking and feeling in clichés will get nowhere unless he throws over his accumulated ballast. Such words as Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason, Hope, Work, Love—all have to be re-learned in order to understand Beelzebub. Come to that, Beelzebub himself has to be plucked out of his accustomed context. We must here, in effect, give the Devil his due. As for the new words, so full of portent and content, the only way to deal with them is to take them in as children take in grown-up words they do not understand. These act as grains of sand round which the pearl of feeling grows. Without analysis or interpretation, children let a story become part of them and themselves part of it. The fact that *All and Everything* is told to a child seems to me a hint from the author along the lines of all fairy-tale clues—that the door into the story can only be unlocked by the same key as opens the kingdom of Heaven. Through Hassein, the grave child, the unfaltering listener, half-grown creature full of the passionate compassion of youth and containing in himself the fructive seed of wisdom, the reader is enabled to look upon himself as in a mirror. In spite of all the poetry, the invention and the flashes of comedy, it is not a pretty picture. Cosmically, man is made to appear at once smaller and larger than he has hitherto conceived himself to be: smaller, because he no longer stands at the centre of creation, as the flung stone from which the universe widens ring on ring; larger, because (though there is a catch in it) he still has, in spite of all he has wasted, the possibility of change. The past may be redeemed and a nobler future prepared. But this possibility—here is the catch—must be used now, worked for at this moment: not after luncheon or tomorrow, but Now. Do you catch the fairy-tale echo?

The cosmology of the book is tremendous. We are shown, as from a height, the worlds harmoniously rising from, or descending into, each other like notes in a universal octave. The cosmic laws of Three and Seven are unfolded, recalling us again to the Three Brothers and the Seven Brothers of the fairy-tales. Great images abound; the reciprocal feeding of all created things, for instance—which seems miraculous until one realises that it must be true and therefore inevitable. Everything at every moment partakes of everything else. What we eat and what we are eaten by is the subject of a large part of the story. The ancients instructed man in his inter-relation with the planets. Paracelsus gave the same reminder when he said we ate stars with our bread. And this book repeats the message—with one proviso. That proviso is the core and crux (*coeur et croix* would be truer) of Beelzebub's discourse, as it is the underlying implication of all fairy-tales. It is that man must work. His bread he may get by physical sweat; but to eat of the substance of Arcturus and Orion—or, nearer home,

Jupiter and Venus—he must perform other and harder labours. The provisions for these are explicitly set down in the story. Man must *be* at every second. He must live his life as though it were his death; not turning from the world but, on the contrary, living in the world *alive*. Not just breathing in and out and the years passing.

All and everything the book offers. The fairy-tale word for it was Happy-Ever-After. No fairy-tale, however, ever failed to send in a bill and neither does Beelzebub. In return for all and everything, nothing short of all and everything is demanded. Existence, we are warned, is something that has to be paid for (the plea 'I never asked to be born!' would get short shrift here) and time is running out. Dream on, cries the tale, at your peril!

Are we all, then, sleeping beauties, hidden in forests of habit? If shame shakes us and we are honest, the answer must be Yes. Would the earth be where it is if we were not asleep? But there are other atom bombs to be discovered than those that ruin and kill. Every fairy-tale from the beginning of time has been a small explosion, full of healing if man would be healed. The great truths are still to be heard, if man wills to listen, for it is not in his power to silence them. They are objective and outside him.

Many such thunderbolts, many bombs of warning and healing are to be found in this allegory of *All and Everything*. Each chapter throws a new light upon man's condition. The one on America, almost the longest, is also one of the most significant. For it was in America, even though he arraigns it, that Beelzebub found more of that 'brotherliness' necessary for man's happier life than in any other country visited. The whole book is, in fact, a brotherly pronouncement. It is as though an elder brother—or, according to the fairy-tale, that youngest brother—out of his own deep experience were noting down for us the wisdom he had learned. Reading it is like being wrought upon by a great winnowing fan. One is caught up, small, shamed and shaken, dizzily turning in the air, not knowing whether one will drop among the chaff or the grain. But a large calm falls on the story in the end as the grandson, ever compassionate, asks of his grandfather some comfort for the beings of earth. The answer comes swiftly, cold and bitter, but it lifts up on the wings of poetry because it is true and because it springs from love. And it seems, as we close the book, that there is a stir in the enchanted castle and a falling back of those embracing thorns. Stepping through them, the grave child Hassein comes and, lightly touching each upon the shoulder, summons us with the oldest of fairy-tale admonitions —Awake, sleeper, awake!

RESURRECTIONS

ANDRÉ MALRAUX

THE Middle Ages, never conceived as a moment in history, were nevertheless linked in depth with a past, quite different from an historic past, from which it would never have occurred to anyone that they should be separated. This is also true of Islam and of India, where India and Islam still exist. Its present, as its recollection, was a moment in the eternal. There was less of antiquity than of eternity than one imagines in the Renaissance, even in those societies where the substitution was greatest. There was a link that, across centuries of history known only as annals of chronology, had united man with Mother Earth as with the Hero, with Venus as with Christ, not in successsion, but in communion. When this was broken, the presentiment, then the proclamation of art, as conceived by modern art, came first, as the supreme value. But if our art and our resurrections arise together and from the same impulse, they do not, for that reason, coincide. Through these resuscitated arts, our culture pursues its dialogue with the ephemeral absolutes men have carried in their hearts, and, in modelling the past, establishes the link which the Greek gods established with the cosmos, and Christ with the feeling of the world and the countless souls of the living and the dead. Each Sumerian work of art suggests a kingdom of Sumer, partly intangible and in part possessed. The great museums satisfy our need for the exotic in history, *giving* us a vast domain of human capacities, but the deep imprint left by the sensitivity of earth is not the imprint of history. Art does not revive dead societies, but the ideal of compensatory images they formed of themselves: it is always an image of a nature other than their own.

It is not a question of the adornment of cultures or of visages; it is a question of man taking hold of his destiny as we have seen in creation. The Goyas of the *Casa del Sordo* are not embellished nightmares; they are pictures. The fetish covered with the blood of the sacrifice is not a savage. The sculptured and painted death's head is not a cranium. Byzantium and the Aztec civilisation knew torments which are not expressed in mosaic or sculpture. The horror of the most Spanish of crucifixes is fundamentally different from torture. However terrible an epoch, its music only is transmitted in its style: a museum is a song of history, not its illustration.

We talk of the past as if it were established in our culture like an ancient monument in a modern city, but we know quite well that it is not so. For a very small number of men—enthusiastic historians—it is a subject for

interrogation: its elucidation is the eternal pursuit of victory over chaos. But for all the rest, the past is only alive when it becomes a vast, legendary fiction; but on what is this fiction based? What, in the first instance, are Greece and Rome and the Middle Ages, if not monuments, statues and poetry (I do not say, verse)?

> 'The name of Alexander strikes its note of bronze in our memories less through his campaigns than through the unwearying dream re-awakened by its sound. Conquerors are only victorious soldiers until the artists are aware of them: Caesar's little conquests are closer to us than those of Genghis Khan. It is not the historian who assures glory, it is the artist's hold on the dreams of man.'

In the same way, art has forms which suggest a history which is not true history, but one through which humanity is nourished: the great Romans could not have influenced the Convention in the same way as Plutarch; living Greece could not have influenced Europe in the same way as its statues and its Acropolis. In the sense that Amphitrite was the Goddess of the Sea, bringing help in tempests, so Greek art is the God of Greece. It is Greek art, and not the personalities of Olympus, which brings us Greece at its noblest, fraternal, unconquered by time, for it is through art alone that Greece can touch our souls. Many an art has belonged to its Gods, but Apollo still contemplates the forgetful furrows that cover the Gods of Tyre, disdainful of poems and statues. All arts are the divine intermediaries of civilisations, the Olympus of a strange polytheism.

There are some, all the more powerful—as with other gods—in that they are charged with the unknown.

The art of the steppes, even if it does not alter the history of the nomad Asiatics, does, however, render the sentiments it evokes in us singularly more complex. The unquiet, alluring charm we find in the works of art of half-caste civilisations is not always derived from their plastic qualities: the poetry of Greco-Buddhist art is that of the *Anabasis* of St. John Perse. The art of the Palmyra figures, of Elcho, of dying Egypt, of Central Asia, is of the same nature. And the composite art of the Shivas of Tourane suggests a soul in which the subtlety of the Malay arises out of savagery, just as in forest glades his temples arise sparkling through the dew of gigantic spiders' webs. It is the poetry of the art of the great frontiers: where Java mingles with Polynesia, China with the steppes, Egypt with Greece, and Greece with India, Byzantium with Persia, Islam with Spain, and the latter with Mexico . . . And it is almost the poetry of works of art suggesting societies of which we are hardly conscious,[1] prehistoric paintings, Hunnish plaques, Manichaean miniatures—and the mysterious *Warrior of Capestrano*. Looking at this warrior, at cave paintings and all these illustrations of forgotten texts, it is impossible not to feel the appeal that was once that of forbidden seas, strangely attuned to the aura whose genius still intimately surrounds

[1]See illustrations on following pages

A NEW CLUE TO LOST CIVILISATIONS

André Malraux was one of the first to indicate that photographic enlargements of a few coins sometimes enable us to approach an artistic style of which almost every other trace has disappeared. Amongst the peoples whose art we may rediscover are the Parisii, the boatmen of the Lower Seine in the last centuries B.C. Their central village, on an island in the river, was called Lutetia. The golden stater we reproduce is one of the few specimens of their work which has been found; most of them were recovered from the bottom of the river.

This silver stater of the Gauls (first century B.C.) is an imitation of a tetradrachm coined 300 years before, by Philip of Macedonia, the organiser of an extremely efficient army, and of one of the first national States in Europe. To Philip, a barbarian who became a promoter of Greek civilisation, and once presided over the Delphi games, the horse may have been connected with Apollo's sun-chariot. The Gauls probably associated it with their horse-goddess, Epona. Passing from one civilisation to another, the form itself remained almost unchanged. According to Malraux, it may suggest another instance of the 'life of forms continuing through the eras', 'comparable, perhaps, in its strength to the strong chain of historic events'.

'The Lion and His Prey', one of the most violent, and most impressive, symbols of power, attracted patrons and artists from the remote ages to the end of Hellenism. Malraux feels that the genealogy of some of antiquity's favourite subjects may be established by coins of which an incomparably higher number has come down to us than of larger works of art. Here reproduced is the back of a stater of the middle of the fourth century B.C., circulated by a king of Cilicia, a fertile and once powerful country on the south coast of Asia Minor, through which Greek civilisation spread at an early time.

'*Athena Promachos*' (*Athena in the battle front*), *from a drachm of King Pyrrhus of Epirus* (*beginning of the third century B.C.*). *In Pyrrhus' battle front, the Romans met for the first time with elephants and with the phalanges of spearmen which were the secret behind the Macedonian victories. In himself, they met one of the new despots of the school of Alexander the Great. Anointed with all the ointments of Asian and Greek civilisations, he fascinated them.*

(Photos: INA BANDY—*Report*)

our awareness, to the cadence of silvern chimes that echo to the name of Florence. History is at one and the same time the troubled pursuit of the past, and the hope of rendering it intelligible: a museum is a recomposition of a world as different from truth as a work of art is from reality. History attempts to transform destiny into consciousness, and art to transform it into liberty; faced with an intangible past, it spreads the possessed past before us like a fan, and discovers, out of so many gods and devils, only that which was reduced to the human.

When history began to assume the rôle of the breathless prophetess in which we now know her, various pasts began to make themselves known. There are the Middle Ages according to Michelet, a Greece according to Taine: and there is, also according to Michelet, a Revolution important in quite a different way from his Middle Ages, since it was an admirable staging, in forms and passion, of a collective feeling which it transformed into myth. But, if rather more weakly, there is the mythical Greece of Renan and Taine, responsible for expressing the Golden Age; there is a Greece of Phidias; if the *romantisme* had its myth of the Middle Ages, there were the Middle Ages of the cathedrals. These last are less affirmative than the first; they demand no primacy—on the contrary, they are the more effective, the more they complete each other. And they have neither a passive nor a counterpart. Sumer, Babylon, Nineveh, Teotihuacan, are, in art, no more than the hymns of their night; the sordid history of Byzantium is the majesty of the Pantocrator; that of China, the Tao and the meditation of Buddha; the squalor of the steppes, the plaques of gold; the plagues of the Middle Ages, a *Pietà*. The bloodstream of living humanity inevitably transmits its monsters, but the image of the scourge of the world is transmitted by dead artists. The horror of Assyria, in spite of the kings of its bas-reliefs, blinding their captives, fills our memory with the majesty of the *Wounded Lion*. I have seen the fetishes of Nuremberg justify their timeless laughter in the last smoke rising from the ruins, where a girl on a bicycle, laden with lilac, was jolting along to the tune sung by the black lorry-drivers. But if there were an art of the crematorium, whose fires had been extinguished only that day, it would be an expression not of the murderers, but of their martyrs.

THE ROBOT PICODIRIBIBI

HENRY MILLER

POSING as a Florentine, though he had not seen Italy since he was two years old, Caccicacci could tell marvellous anecdotes about the great Florentines: all pure inventions. Some of these anecdotes he repeated, with alterations and elaborations, the extent of these depending on the indulgence of his listeners.

One of these 'inventions' concerned a robot of the twelfth century, the creation of a mediæval scholar whose name he could never recall. Originally, Caccicacci was content to describe this mechanical freak (which he insisted was hermaphroditic) as a sort of tireless drudge, capable of performing all sorts of menial tasks, some of them rather droll. But as he continued to embellish the tale, the robot—which he always referred to as Picodiribibi—gradually came to assume powers and propensities which were, to say the least, astounding. For example, after being taught to imitate the human voice, Picodiribibi's master instructed his mechanical drudge in certain arts and sciences which were useful to the master—to wit, the memorising of weights and measures, of theorems and logarithms, of certain astronomical calculations, of the names and positions of the constellations at any season for the previous 700 years. He also instructed him in the use of the saw, the hammer and chisel, the compass, the sword and pike, as well as certain primitive musical instruments. Picodiribibi, consequently, was not only a sort of *femme de ménage*, sergeant-at-arms, amanuensis and compendium of useful information, but a soothing spirit who could lull his master to sleep with weird melodies in the Doric mode. However, like the parrot in the cage, this Picodiribibi developed a fondness for speech which was beyond all bounds. At times his master had difficulty in suppressing this proclivity. The robot, who had been taught to recite lengthy poems in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and other tongues, would sometimes take it into his head to recite his whole repertoire without pausing for breath and, of course, with no consideration for his master's peace of mind. And, since fatigue was utterly meaningless to him, he would occasionally ramble on in this senseless, faultless fashion, reeling off weights and measures, logarithmic tables, astronomical dates and figures, and so on, until his master, beside himself with rage and irritation, would flee the house. Other curious eccentricities manifested themselves in the course of time. Adept in the art of self-defence, Picodiribibi would engage his master's guests in combat upon the slightest provocation, knocking them

about like ninepins, bruising and battering them mercilessly. Almost as embarrassing was the habit he had developed of joining in a discussion, suddenly flooring the great scholars who had come to sit at the master's feet by propounding intricate questions, in the form of conundrums, which of course were unanswerable.

Little by little, Picodiribibi's master became jealous of his own creation. What infuriated him above all, curiously enough, was the robot's tirelessness. The latter's ability to keep going twenty-four hours of the day, his gift for perfection, meaningless though it was, the ease and rapidity with which he modulated from one feat of skill to another: these qualities or aptitudes soon transformed 'the idiot', as he now began to call his invention, into a menace and a mockery. There was scarcely anything any more which 'the idiot' could not do better than the master himself. There remained only a few faculties the monster would never possess, but of these animal functions the master himself was not particularly proud. It was obvious that, if he were ever to recapture his peace of mind, there was only one thing to be done—destroy his precious creation! This, however, he was loath to do. It had taken him twenty years to put the monster together and make him function. In the whole wide world there was nothing to equal the bloody idiot. Moreover, he could no longer recall by what intricate, complicated and mysterious processes he had brought his labours to fruition. In every way Picodiribibi rivalled the human being whose simulacrum he was. True, he would never be able to reproduce his own kind, but, like the freaks and sports of human spawn, he would undoubtedly leave in the memory of man a disturbing, haunting image.

To such a pass had the great scholar come that he almost went insane. Unable to destroy his invention, he racked his brain to determine how and where he might sequester him. For a time he thought of burying him in the garden, in an iron casket. He even entertained the idea of locking him up in a monastery. But fear, fear of loss, fear of damage or deterioration, paralysed him. It was becoming more and more clear that, inasmuch as he had brought Picodiribibi into being, he would have to live with him for ever. He found himself pondering how they could be buried together, secretly, when the time came. Strange thought! The idea of taking with him to the grave a creature which was not alive, and yet in many ways more alive than himself, terrified him. He was convinced that, even in the next world, this prodigy to which he had given birth would plague him, would possibly usurp his own celestial privileges. He began to realise that, in assuming the powers of the Creator, he had robbed himself of the blessing which death confers upon even the humblest believer. He saw himself as a shade flitting for ever between two worlds—and his creation pursuing him. Ever a devout man, he now began to pray long and fervently for deliverance. On his knees he begged the Lord to intercede, to lift from his

shoulders the awesome burden of responsiblity which he had unthinkingly assumed. But the Almighty ignored his pleas.

Humiliated, and in utter desperation, he was at last obliged to appeal to the Pope. On foot he made the journey with his strange companion from Florence to Avignon. By the time he arrived there, he had attracted a veritable horde in his wake. Only by a miracle had he escaped being stoned to death, for by now all Italy was aware that the Devil himself was seeking audience with his Holiness. The Pope, however, himself a learned man and a master of the occult sciences, had taken great pains to safeguard this curious pilgrim and his offspring. It was rumoured that his Holiness had intentions of adopting the monster himself, if for no other reason than to make of him a worthy Christian. Attended only by his favourite Cardinal, the Pope received the penitent scholar and his mysterious ward in the privacy of his chamber. What took place in the four and a half hours which elapsed, nobody knows. The result, if it can be called such, was that the day after, the scholar died a violent death. The following day his body was publicly burned and the ashes scattered in the Tiber.

At this point in his narrative Caccicacci paused, waiting for the inevitable question—'*And what happened to Picodiribibi?*' Caccicacci put on a mysterious, baiting smile, raised his empty glass appealingly, coughed, cleared his throat, and, before resuming, inquired if he might have another sandwich.

'*Picodiribibi!* Ah, now you ask me something! Have any of you ever read Occam—or the *Private Papers* of Albertus Magnus?'

No one had, of course.

'Every now and then,' he continued, the question being wholly rhetorical, 'one hears of a sea monster appearing off the coast of Labrador or some other outlandish place. What would you say if tomorrow it were reported that a weird human monster had been glimpsed roaming through Sherwood Forest? You see, Picodiribibi was not the first of his line. Even in Egyptian times legends were in circulation, attesting to the existence of androids such as Picodiribibi. In the great museums of Europe there are documents which describe in detail various androids or robots, as we now call them, that were made by the wizards of old. Nowhere, however, is there any record of the destruction of these man-made monsters. In fact, all the source material we have on the subject leads to the striking conclusion that the monster always succeeded in escaping from the hands of his master . . . '

Here Caccicacci paused again and looked about inquiringly.

'I am not saying it is so,' he continued, 'but there is respectable evidence to support the view that in some remote and inaccessible spot these Satanic creatures continue their unnatural existence. It is highly probable, in fact, that by this time they have established a veritable colony. Why not? They

have no age, they're immune to disease—and they are ignorant of death. Like that sage who defied the great Alexander, they may indeed boast of being indestructible. Some scholars maintain that by now these lost and imperishable relics have probably created their own unique method of communication—more, that they have even learned to reproduce their own kind, *mechanically*, of course. They hold that, if the human being evolved from the dumb brute, why could these prefabricated creatures not do likewise—and in less time? Man is as mysterious in his way as is God. So is the creature world. And so is the inanimate world, if we but reflect on it. If these androids had the wisdom and the ingenuity to escape from their vigilant masters, from their horrible condition of servitude, might they not have the ability to protect themselves indefinitely, become sociable with their own kind, increase and multiply? Who can say with certitude that there does not exist somewhere on this globe a fabulous village—perhaps a resplendent city!—populated entirely by these soulless specimens, many of them older than the mightiest sequoia?

'But I am forgetting about Picodiribibi . . . The day his master came to a violent end, he disappeared. All over the land a hue and cry went up, but in vain. Not a trace of him was ever found. Now and then there were reports of mysterious deaths, of inexplicable accidents and disasters, all attributed, of course, to Picodiribibi. Many scholars were persecuted, some put to the stake, because they were thought to have given shelter to the monster. It was even rumoured that the Pope had ordered a 'replica' of Picodiribibi to be manufactured, and that he had made dark use of this spurious one. All rumour and conjecture, to be sure. Nevertheless, it is a fact that, hidden in the archives of the Vatican, are descriptions of other robots more or less contemporaneous; none of these, however, is credited with possessing anything approaching the functional range of Picodiribibi. Today, of course, we have all sorts of robots, one of them, as you know, drawing his first breath of life, so to speak, from the radiance of a distant star. Had it been possible to do this in the early Middle Ages, think, try to think, of the havoc which would have ensued. The inventor would have been accused of employing black magic. He would have been burned at the stake, would he not? But there may have been another result, dazzling and sinister at the same time. Instead of machines, perhaps we would now be using these star-driven menials. Perhaps the work of the world would be done entirely by these expert work-hungry slaves . . . '

Here he stopped short, smiled as if bemused, then suddenly burst out with this: '*And who would arise to emancipate them?* You laugh. But do we not regard the machine as our slave? And do we not suffer just as indubitably from this false relationship as did the wizards of old with their androids? Back of our deep-rooted desire to escape the drudgery of work lies the longing for Paradise. To the man of today Paradise means not only

freedom from sin but freedom from work, for work has become odious and degrading. When man ate of the Tree of Knowledge, he elected to find a short-cut to Godhood. He attempted to rob the Creator of the divine secret, which to him spelled power. What has been the result? Sin, disease, death. Eternal warfare, eternal unrest. The little we know, we use for our own destruction. We know not how to escape the tyranny of the convenient monsters we have created. We delude ourselves into believing that, by means of them, we shall one day enjoy leisure and bliss, but all we accomplish, to be truthful, is to create more work for ourselves, more distress, more enmity, more sickness, more death. By our ingenious inventions and discoveries, we are gradually altering the face of the earth—until it becomes unrecognisable in its ugliness. Until life itself becomes unbearable . . . That little beam of light from a remote star—I ask you, if that imperishable ray of light could thus affect a non-human being, why could it not do as much for us? With all the stars in the heavens lavishing their radiant powers on us, with the aid of the sun, the moon and all the planets, how is it that we continue to remain in darkness and frustration? Why do we wear out so quickly, when the elements of which we are composed are indestructible? *What is it that wears out?* Not that of which we are made, that is certain. We wither and fade away; we perish, because the desire to live is extinguished. And why does this most potent flame die out? Because we lack faith. From the time we are born, we are told that we are mortal. From the time we are able to understand words, we are taught that we must kill in order to survive. In season and out, we are reminded that, no matter how intelligently, reasonably or wisely we live, we shall become sick and die. We are inoculated with the idea of death almost from birth. Is it any wonder that we die?'

Caccicacci drew a deep breath. There was something he was struggling to convey, something beyond words, one might say. It was evident that he was being carried away by his narrative. One felt that he was trying to convince himself of something. The impression he gave me was that he had told this story over and over—in order to arrive at a conclusion beyond the limits of his own comprehension. Perhaps he knew, deep down, that the tale had a significance which eluded him only because he lacked the courage to pursue it to the end. A man may be a story-teller, a fabulist, a downright liar, but embedded in all fiction and falsehood there is a core of truth. The inventor of Picodiribibi was a story-teller too, in his way. He had created a fable or legend mechanically instead of verbally. He had defrauded our senses just as much as the artist in words. However . . .

'Sometimes,' said Caccicacci, solemnly now and with all the sincerity that he was capable of mustering, 'I am convinced that there is no hope for mankind unless we make a complete break with the past. I mean, unless we begin to think differently and live differently. I know it sounds banal

. . . it has been said thousands of times and nothing has happened. You see, I keep thinking of the great suns which surround us, of these vast solar bodies in the heavens of which no one knows anything, except that they exist. From one of them it is admitted that we draw our sustenance. Some include the moon as a vital factor of earthly existence. Others speak of the beneficent or maleficent influence of the planets. But if you stop to think, everything, I mean literally everything which is, whether visible or invisible, known or unknown, is vital to our existence. We live amidst a network of magnetic forces which, in a variety of ways incalculable and indescribable, are ceaselessly operative. We created none of these ourselves. A few we have learned to harness, to exploit, as it were. And we are puffed with pride because of our petty achievements. But even the boldest, even the proudest among our latter-day magicians, is bound to admit that what we know is infinitesimal compared to what we do not know. I beg you, stop a moment and reflect! Does any one honestly believe that one day we shall know all? I go farther . . . I ask you in all sincerity—do you honestly believe that our salvation depends on *knowing*? Assuming for a moment that the human brain is capable of cramming into its mysterious fibres the sum total of the secret processes which govern the universe, what then? Yes, *what then*? What would we do, we humans, with this unthinkable knowledge? Have you ever asked yourself that question? Every one seems to take it for granted that the accumulation of knowledge is a good thing. No one ever says—"And what shall I do with it when I have it?" No one dares believe any longer that, in the span of one short lifetime, it is possible to acquire even a minute fraction of the sum of all *existent* human knowledge . . . '

Another breathing spell. We were all ready with the bottle this time. Caccicacci was labouring. He had gone off on a detour. It was not knowledge, or the lack of it, that he was truly concerned with. He made a desperate effort to retrace his steps. After floundering about a bit, he got back to the main line.

'Faith! I was talking about faith a moment ago. We've lost it, lost it completely. Faith in anything, I mean. Yet faith is the only thing we live by. Not knowledge, which is admittedly inexhaustible, and in the end futile or destructive. But faith. Faith, too, is inexhaustible. Always has been, always will be. It is faith which inspires deeds. It is faith which overcomes obstacles—literally moves mountains, as the Bible says. *Faith in what?* Just faith. Faith in everything, if you like. Perhaps a better word would be acceptance. But acceptance is even more difficult to understand than faith. Immediately you utter the word, there is an inquisitioner which says: "*Evil too?*" And if one says yes, there is no chance to proceed. You are laughed out of countenance, shunned like a leper. Good, you see, may be questioned, but evil—and this is a paradox—evil, though we struggle

constantly to eliminate it, is always taken for granted. No one doubts the existence of evil, though it is only an abstract term for something which is constantly changing character and which, on close analysis, is often found to be good. No one will accept evil at its face value. It is there—*where?*—and it is not there. The mind refuses to accept it unconditionally. It would seem as if it existed only to be converted into its opposite. The simplest and readiest way to accomplish this is, of course, to accept it. But who is wise enough to adopt such a course?

'I think of Picodiribibi again. Was there anything "evil" about his appearance or existence? Yet he was held in dread by the world in which he found himself. He was regarded as a violation of nature. *But is man himself not a violation of nature?* If we could fashion another Picodiribibi, or one even more marvellous in his functioning, would we not be in ecstasy? Now then, suppose that instead of a more marvellous *robot*, we were suddenly confronted by a genuine human being whose attributes were so incomparably superior to our own that he resembled a god? This is a hypothetical question, to be sure, though there are, and always have been, invividuals who maintain, and persist in maintaining, despite reason and ridicule, that they have had witness of such divine beings. We can all summon suitable names. I prefer to think of a mythical being, some one nobody has ever heard of, or seen, or will know in this life. Some one, to be brief, who *could* exist and fulfil the requirements I mentioned . . . '

Here Caccicacci digressed. He was obliged to confess he did not know what had prompted him to make such a statement, nor where he was heading. He kept rubbing his poll and murmuring over and over: 'Strange, strange, but I thought I had something there.'

Suddenly his face lit up with joy. 'Ah yes, I know now. I've got it! Listen . . . Supposing this being, universally admitted to be superior to us in every way, should take it to address the world in this fashion: "Stop where you are, O men and women, and give heed! You are on the wrong track. You are headed for destruction." And supposing that everywhere on this globe the billions which make up humanity did stop what they were doing and listened. Even if this god-like being said nothing more than what I've just put in his mouth, what do you suppose the effect would be? Has the entire world ever stopped to listen in unison to words of wisdom? Imagine, if you can, a total, drastic silence, all ears cocked to catch the fatal words! *Would it even be necessary to utter the words?* Can you not imagine that every one, in the silence of his heart, would be supplying the answer himself? There is only one response that humanity longs to give—and it can be voiced in one little monosyllable. *Love!* That little word, that mighty thought, that perpetual act, positive, unambiguous, eternally effective—if that should sink in, take possession of all mankind, would it not transform the world instantly? Who could resist, if love became the order of the day?

Who would want power or knowledge—if he were bathed in the perpetual glory of love?

'It is said, as you know, that in the fastnesses of Tibet there actually exists a small band of men so immeasurably superior to us that they are called "The Masters". They live in voluntary exile from the rest of humanity. Like the androids I spoke of earlier, they, too, are ageless, immune to disease, and *indestructible*. Why do they not mingle with us, enlighten and ennoble us by their presence? Why have they chosen to remain isolate? Do I need to tell you that it is *we* who keep them at a distance? What have we to offer them which they do not already know, possess or enjoy? If such men exist, and I have reason to believe they do, they are separated from us only by consciousness. When we reach to a deeper level of thought and being, they will be there, so to speak. We are still unready, unwilling to mingle with the gods. The men of olden times knew the gods: they saw them face to face. Man was not removed, in consciousness, from either the higher or the lower orders of creation. But today he is cut off. Today we live as slaves. We are slaves to one another. We have created a condition hitherto unknown: we have become the slaves of slaves. Never doubt it—the moment we truly desire freedom, we shall be free. Not one whit sooner. Now we think like machines, and we have become as machines. We crave power, and we are the helpless victims of power. The day we learn to express love we shall know love and have love—and all else will fall away. Evil is a creation of the human mind. It is powerless when accepted at face value. *Because it has no value in itself.* Evil exists only as a threat to that eternal kingdom of love we but dimly apprehend. Yes, men have had visions of a liberated humanity. They have had visions of walking the earth like the gods they once were. Those beings called "The Masters" undoubtedly found the road back. Perhaps the androids have taken another road. All roads, believe it or not, lead eventually to that one life-giving source which is the centre and the meaning of creation. As Lawrence said with dying breath—"For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower, beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive . . . " In that sense, Picodiribibi was never alive. In that sense, none of us is alive. *Let us become fully alive*, that is what I have been trying to say.'

AN IRREGULAR GENIUS

The Significance of D. H. Lawrence

HERBERT READ

THE phrase 'an irregular genius' was used by Walter Bagehot to describe the genius of Charles Dickens, but the cap fits D. H. Lawrence. 'D. H. Lawrence *was* a genius,' asserts Richard Aldington in his recent biography,[1] but asks: 'what sort of a genius?' Bagehot provides him with an answer—page after page of his brilliant essay could be quoted and, with the substitution of the name, would apply perfectly to Lawrence. Let us try the experiment:

> The truth is, that Lawrence wholly wants the two elements which we have spoken of as one or other requisite for a symmetrical genius. He is utterly deficient in the faculty of reasoning. 'Mamma, what shall I think about?' said the little girl. 'My dear, don't think', was the old-fashioned reply. We do not allege that in the strict theory of education this was a correct reply; modern writers think otherwise; but we wish someone would say it to Mr. Lawrence. He is often troubled with the idea that he must reflect, and his reflections are perhaps the worst reading in the world. There is a sentimental confusion about them; we never find the consecutive precision of mature theory, or the cold distinctness of clear thought. Vivid facts stand out in his imagination; and a fresh illustrative style brings them home to the imagination of his readers; but his continuous philosophy utterly fails in the attempt to harmonise them—to educe a theory or elaborate a precept from them . . . his didactic humour is very unfortunate: no writer is less fitted for an excursion to the imperative mood . . . his abstract understanding is so far inferior to his picturesque imagination as to give even to his best works the sense of jar and incompleteness, and to deprive them altogether of the crystalline finish which is characteristic of the clear and cultured understanding.

Personally I would question one detail in the application of such an indictment to Lawrence—his failure to educe a theory or elaborate a precept from his extreme sensibility to circumstances—but Mr. Aldington cannot object. 'Those who go to Lawrence for a coherent philosophical system,' he tells us, 'or require him to state reasons and draw maps for everything he said or wrote, waste their time. What matters is not his opinions and prejudices, but himself, the life and beauty he can transmit more than anyone else of his age. As to contradiction, who does not contradict himself unless he happens to be unusually dull or a repulsive, canny, and crafty careerist?'

[1] *Portrait of a Genius, But . . . .* Heinemann, 15s.

Twenty-five years ago Mr. Edwin Muir wrote a criticism of Lawrence which was substantially the same as Bagehot's criticism of Dickens. A copy of the review reached Lawrence, and we have his reaction to it in a scornful article called 'Accumulated Mail', reprinted in the Penguin *Selected Essays*. He lists nine points from Muir's review, rather with the intention of showing up their niggling irrelevance than with any idea of answering them. 'For me,' he concludes, 'give me a little splendour, and I'll leave perfection to the small fry.'

A little splendour—he meant the occasional and fugitive splendour of the rainbow, an image he uses in this same article. Lawrence found a little splendour and caught it in a net of words—no sensitive critic will deny that. But a question persists, and again Bagehot will express it for us: though Muir expressed it too. 'He has not submitted himself to any discipline', he wrote. To which Lawrence retorted that 'the little god in a Ford machine cannot get at the thing worth having, not even with the most praiseworthy little engine of a will.' But Bagehot is more explicit, and just as concerned as Lawrence for 'the thing worth having'. He has been discussing the submission to discipline observable in men of regular and symmetrical genius, and continues:

> But the case is very different with men of irregular or anomalous genius, whose excellencies consist in the *aggravation* of some special faculty, or at the most of one or two. The discipline which will fit him for the production of great literary works is that which will most develop the peculiar powers in which he excels; the rest of the mind will be far less important, it will not be likely that the culture which is adapted to promote this special development will also be that which is most fitted for expanding the powers of common men in common directions. The precise problem is to develop the powers of a strange man in a strange direction.

That, it seems to me, was Lawrence's problem. He was a strange man and he had peculiar powers. Did he develop those powers in the most effective way, or was he led astray by incompatible ambitions?

It is easy to get on a high horse and gallop over the poor devil who is down and out. I have no desire to do that in the case of Lawrence—he has been too near to me in age and origins, in ideals and aspirations. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, I discovered his first poems in *The English Review*. I bought *The White Peacock* as soon as it appeared, and I had *The Rainbow* on order from the publisher before it appeared, so that I got my copy before the first edition was seized by the police. I was a young subaltern then, and I remember writing a gauche letter of sympathy to the persecuted author, no doubt an unexpected and even unwelcome tribute from such a quarter. Lawrence was a hero to me and, though I never met him, I was one of the first to visit his grave in Vence. Such personal details are relevant because they show that, whatever other powers Lawrence may have lacked, he had the capacity to rouse the enthusiasm and inspire the

minds of his contemporaries. Mr. Aldington seems to me to play down this side of Lawrence too much: he is himself an anti-intellectualist, scornful of 'that quasi-philosophising which now passes as criticism.' Works of Lawrence, such as *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, are barely mentioned and do not appear in the bibliography at the end of the volume. But Lawrence was first and foremost what Aldington calls a quasi-philosopher. *First and foremost*—for he asserted in his Foreword to the *Fantasia* that it seemed to him 'that even art is utterly dependent on philosophy: or, if you prefer it, on a metaphysic. The metaphysic or philosophy may not be anywhere very accurately stated and may be quite unconscious, in the artist, yet it is a metaphysic that governs men at the time, and is by all men more or less comprehended and lived. Men live and see according to some gradually developing and gradually withering vision. That vision exists also as a dynamic idea or metaphysics—exists first as such. Then it is unfolded into life and art.' He went so far as to assert that 'this pseudo-philosophy of mine—"pollyanalytics", as one of my respected critics might say—is deduced from the novels and poems, not the reverse. The novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen. And then the absolute need which one has for some sort of satisfactory mental attitude towards oneself and things in general makes one try to abstract some definite conclusions from one's experiences as a writer and as a man. The novels and poems are pure passionate experience. These "pollyanalytics" are inferences made afterwards, from the experience.'

Presumably Mr. Aldington does not feel this same 'absolute need', for his whole book is a denial of this side of Lawrence—a betrayal, not an examination and consequent rejection. The real importance of Lawrence, in my opinion, lies in his awareness of the 'withering vision' and in his determination 'to rip the old veil of a vision across, and find what the heart really believes in, after all: and what the heart really wants, for the next future. And we've got to put it down in terms of belief and of knowledge. And then go forward again, to the fulfilment in life and art.' An artist like Lawrence is not driven to science and metaphysics and 'pollyanalytics' out of perversity—or, as Aldington, himself indulging momentarily in pollyanalytics, ventures to suggest, out of a power complex. 'Was it not Lawrence's worst error in life,' he writes, 'to think that because he had unique and very real power as an artist and a personality he was also entitled to the very different power of the man of action, the ruler, the Messiah? Certainly the hope haunted him for years, and the inevitable frustration maddened and embittered him.' This is to miss the point by an astronomical distance, and the gloss that follows only makes matters worse: 'As a matter of fact, he mistook the very nature of power. An exceptional man longs passionately to change something, to achieve something, and power comes to him; but Lawrence wanted power for the sake of

the sensation, being far too unstable to have any dominating steady purpose.' That is simply false. From his first poems to his last 'pansies', Lawrence had a steady purpose—to find what the heart really believes in and what the heart really wants. And that is the metaphysical activity, the philosophising that Mr. Aldington despises. Lawrence did not despise it because he recognised that, until the ground had been cleared of the rotten industrial civilisation into which we have been born, there was no possibility of free scope for the artist. And how could the ground be cleared? Not in a day, to be sure, and not single-handed; but by preaching in the wilderness, by revolutionary propaganda. That was Ruskin's idea, too, and Mr. Aldington is quite right in drawing a comparison between Lawrence and Ruskin (but not in asserting that Lawrence 'was the closer observer and the more vivid writer'). But he does this merely to assert that 'they shared an almost comical conviction of their power to change the world by writing a few books.' The world has been changed quite a bit since Mr. Aldington was born, and if he had had time to ask Lenin and Gandhi what caused them to be the chief agents of that change, he would have received the answer: 'a few books'—including some of Ruskin's!

Instead of deploring the waste of energy in Lawrence's 'vituperation and futile wrangling', let us rather be grateful that he was moved enough, angry enough, to rip the veil from our sham civilisation, to expose its perversion and hypocrisy. What we must deplore is Lawrence's inability to keep calm, to build up a logical indictment, the effect—to use Bagehot's words again— 'of his deficiency in those masculine faculties—the reasoning understanding and firm far-seeing sagacity'. Neither Ruskin nor Lawrence had the right temperamental disposition (perhaps not even the crude physical strength) to effect that balance of emotion and reason which alone can be fully persuasive. Even Tolstoy, a greater artist than either of them, and a man built for the part, could not quite pull it off. But when all this has been admitted and deplored, a very real achievement remains. It may be that the main agent of our changed and changing views about sex has been Freud. Freud has seeped down into all sorts of popular channels, becoming muddied in the process, and often completely misunderstood. He is a scientist and can only be fully appreciated by people with a scientific training. But Lawrence had an intuitive recognition of the truths revealed by Freud's analytical practice, and he fed this intuition by wide reading in other directions—archaeology, mythology, anthropology, etc. I believe that in some respects he saw farther and deeper than Freud, and his views on marital love and on the education of children have a realism and originality which most people are not yet ready to assimilate. On these questions he was, to use the cant phrase, far in advance of his time. In other words, his ideas are not to be reconciled with any existing social structure. But that does not make them invalid: it merely adds urgency to the need for

a change of social structure. Lawrence was intelligent enough to see that the necessary social structure would not be provided by 'democracy', and his contempt for this political racket earned him the opprobrious taunt of 'Fascist'. Lawrence was not a Fascist: he was, if any general name can be given to his highly individual views, a particular kind of anarchist—not my kind, but somewhere between Tolstoy and Berdyaev. He had a deep loathing for the State and all its works, and realised that salvation could only come spontaneously from small communities. He dreamed of establishing such a community. He was drawn to the Etruscans because their evanescent civilisation seemed to have exhibited 'a real desire to preserve the natural humour of life'. And far from being a Fascist, he thought that that was 'a task surely more worthy, and even much more difficult in the long run, than conquering the world or sacrificing the self or saving the immortal soul.' Why, he asked, has mankind such a craving to be imposed upon? 'Why this lust after imposing creeds, imposing deeds, imposing buildings, imposing language, imposing works of art? The thing becomes an imposition and a weariness at last. Give us things that are alive and flexible, which won't last too long and become an obstruction and a weariness.' Where is your power-complex now, Mr. Aldington? Oh, I know it would be easy for you to quote some other text against me, but it would not be a typical one. The real Lawrence, the 'basic' Lawrence, is in the words I have quoted. That is the Lawrence who first moved me nearly forty years ago, and to whom I still feel grateful. It is not the Lawrence of Mr. Aldington's 'Portrait'—'the world's rejected guest', 'the last of the Goliards', a man who was an artist in spite of himself, a genius, but . . . I do not believe that we can qualify genius in this particular way. It reminds me of the Marxist critic who has to admit the greatness of Tolstoy, *but* only on the assumption that all his ideas are 'historically necessary illusions'. The irregularity of Lawrence's genius—its inadequacy if you like—is patent, but as genius it is indivisible: the rough must be accepted with the smooth, the tough with the tender. Lawrence's ideas were tough, but they are not absurd, and they are not inconsistent with his poetic imagination. Aldington quotes Lawrence on Melville and thinks he has clinched his case:

> Nobody can be more clownish, more clumsy and sententiously in bad taste. He preaches and holds forth because he is not sure of himself. And he holds forth, often, so amateurishly. The artist was so *much* greater than the man. The man is rather a tiresome New Englander of the ethical mystical-transcendentalist sort. But he was a deep, great artist, even if he was rather a sententious man . . . when he forgets his audience, and gives us his sheer appreciation of the world, then he is wonderful, his book commands a stillness in the soul, an awe.

But is Lawrence right about Melville? Is it not rather true, and part of the mystery of human nature, that only a particular kind of tension within a personality can produce a particular intensity of expression. Melville's

ethical mystical-transcendentalism, I would say, was essential to the production of that wonderful 'stillness in the soul'. Only a genius capable of metaphysical speculation could have been aware of that particular 'awe' which he had the power to command. Only a Lawrence who had written the *Fantasia* would have been capable of writing that wonderful description of a religious procession which Aldington quotes from *Sea and Sardinia*, or the last chapter of *Etruscan Places*, *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *The Plumed Serpent*, *The Man Who Died*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. These, the greatest and most typical of Lawrence's writings, are not emanations of some pure aesthetic consciousness. They spring from a mental activity—a mind in revolt against the civilisation it had inherited—and image and symbol, concept and intuition, fable and dogma, were smelted in the same burning brain. To attempt to dissociate two Lawrences is to betray his true significance.

The writer nearest to Lawrence is Whitman: 'Whitman, the great poet, has meant so much to me. Whitman, the one man breaking a way ahead. Whitman, the one pioneer. And only Whitman.' And, like Lawrence, Whitman raises the problem of the moral function of art. In his essay on Whitman, Lawrence declares that 'the essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral.' Aldington, it seems to me, tries to save a decorative, an aesthetic Lawrence from the glorious confusion of his work. I can sympathise with his aim, for I have always myself fought against the deadening influence of moral judgment in art. But there is a difference between moral judgment and moral perception, and Lawrence knew it, and observed it. He continues, in his essay on Whitman: 'But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake. Now Whitman was a great moralist. He was a great leader. He was a great changer of the blood in the veins of men.' Admittedly this blood imagery is overworked by Lawrence, but he wanted to drive home the physical basis of sympathy, which is the clue to all aesthetic influence. Lawrence realised that art had grown dead on us, leprous and insentient. It has been killed by 'education'. 'To *force* the boy to see a correct one-eyed horse-profile is just like pasting a placard in front of his vision. It simply kills his inward seeing. We don't *want* him to see a proper horse. The child is *not* a little camera. He is a small vital organism which has direct dynamic *rapport* with the objects of the outer universe. He perceives from his breast and his abdomen, with deep-sunken realism, the elemental nature of the creature.' And what is true of the child is true of the poet. Read the Preface to *New Poems* (reprinted in the Penguin *Essays*) for the clearest definition of Lawrence's aesthetic. He returns to Whitman. 'The quick of the universe is the *pulsating*, *carnal* self, mysterious and palpable . . . Because Whitman

put this into his poetry, we fear him and respect him so profoundly . . . The utterance is like a spasm, naked contact with all influences at once. *It does not want to get anywhere* (my italics). It just takes place.' Who has ever heard of a morality that does not wish to get anywhere? But that is the kind of morality Lawrence was for ever talking about: a somatic influence, a chemical transformation. The Greeks called it catharsis, but though Lawrence would not use such an academic word, he and Aristotle were talking about the same phenomenon: a purgation of the blood effected by the experience of great art.

Mr. Aldington has given us a definitive biography, and it is well done. It might have been a little more scrupulously documented (it is not the pedant only who wishes to see a quotation in its context), but Mr. Aldington no longer belongs to the critical clerisy. It is, we may hope, the last word on a personality who has been too much written about. What is necessary now is a more fundamental consideration of the art and philosophy of this irregular genius.

TESSA SILLARS

SONG

On my breath spread your wings;
Spring from my heart
And mount
Little lark;
Sing
Your white song;
Its sparkling drops will fall
And melt
The emprisoning crust
Of insufficient trust.
And love is free
To go in peace.

THEATRE NOTES

GERARD FAY

A CHARMING thing about asking a number of people the same question is that their answers are likely to dwell upon different aspects of whatever problem is put up to them. If they all happen to choose roughly the same aspect to deal with, you may be sure that between them they are likely to arrive at the truth—if there is any truth on artistic matters. I have been asking the same question of several playwrights. It went like this: 'Speaking as an established dramatist, do you see signs that a younger generation of playwrights is training itself in the craft, and is there likely to be in, say, twenty-five years, a sufficient supply of plays of merit to support the "commercial theatre" as we know it?'

Now this one question might supply answers to several queries, such as 'What is a play of merit?'; 'What is the commercial theatre?' or even 'What is the craft of a dramatist?'

All are touched upon in the answers I received; none is pinned down precisely by a complete answer. That is just as well. You need to be careful in framing questions—as the public opinion polls know to their cost—and mine was framed with some subtlety to provide a wide scope for replies. It would have been a waste of time asking busy men to produce, for instance, a list of the six most promising dramatists, or ten commandments for the would-be playwright. My question has produced replies which were no waste of time writing and which contain something for the reader to think about. But without building myself up any more as the ideal interrogator, perhaps the best thing will be to give the answers:

From Sean O'Casey

'The question isn't whether there are generations of young writers training themselves to fit with the "commercial" theatre in twenty-five years' time, but whether the "commercial" theatre will be then in existence. I don't believe it will—as "we know it" anyway . . . Drama is part of life—life itself is drama—and as long as there is life, there will be drama—mostly bad—but produced far more readily than that which you call "plays of merit".'

From James Bridie

'The question is difficult to answer in a few sentences, because it seems to imply some sort of systematised method by which a young dramatist can learn his job. In this country there is no such thing, and the names of O'Casey, Eliot, Priestley, and Rattigan, suggest that we can do very well without it. These men have no doubt gained in confidence during many years' traffic in the theatre; but their earlier plays, written when they had no practical experience at all, are pretty nearly as good technically as the plays they are writing today.

'The "craft" of play-making is a blend of the crafts of story-telling and of poetry. That is to say, that a natural gift of expression plays an overwhelming part in the game and mere technical accomplishment a very small one. Any observant lad, if he is in love with the theatre, can master the tricks of the trade in a very few weeks. We are apt to be misled into overrating those tricks by the very complicated mechanism of play production. To draw to a point, natural gifts are an act of God, and I see no reason to suppose that God is any less generous than He has ever been. I read a great many plays, most of them hopeless rubbish. Of the residue, some have no feeling for the medium and some have a feeling for the medium but nothing of interest to express. The good, playable plays are about two per cent of the whole. I do not find that actors have any advantage over laymen in the writing of them.

'From all I hear, two per cent ought to be enough to keep the commercial theatre supplied. Unfortunately both the commercial theatre and the "non-commercial" theatre are under the embargo of finance and the bewildering caprice of the public. Consequently, like the seed of the sower in

the parable, a great deal is wasted and an artificial shortage is created. Theatrical finance is capable of improvement and it is high time something was done about it. But that is another story.'

From J. B. Priestley

'Although in the years immediately after the war it was most disappointingly difficult to discover plays of any promise from new young authors, there are signs now that young dramatists of considerable promise exist and are working. It is possible, of course, that the fashion for rhetorical charades may discourage the young dramatists from mastering the craft of construction, but I think it is hardly likely. What is far more disturbing to me than any possible shortage of good new plays is the economic position of the theatre in this country. The audiences find it difficult to pay our prices of admission, and yet, in fact, when the enormously increasing costs are considered, these prices of admission are actually too low.'

From Terence Rattigan

'It would be very easy to reply to both your questions with a flat "no". On the other hand, I have no doubt whatever that fifty years ago Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones would have answered your questions the same way; one hundred and fifty years ago Sheridan and Goldsmith would have given two equally firm negatives (with more justification); Shakespeare, in his retirement at Stratford, would have been extremely gloomy about the younger brood of Jacobean dramatists, and I am pretty sure that two thousand years ago Sophocles would have told you he was rather afraid that, after his death, there was going to be very little future for the drama, as that young chap Euripides wasn't likely to come to much. So I, for whom not even my greatest admirer would claim the faintest consanguinity with any of these former practitioners of my craft, will modestly give you two quite different answers—Yes and Yes.'

Editor's Note: One hundred and fifty years ago (in 1800) Sheridan was 49; Goldsmith had been dead for 26 years—but we understand exactly what Mr. Rattigan means.

A SUMMING-UP

These answers, though each concentrating on a slightly different aspect of the question, have certain important common points. Priestley and Bridie agree about the craziness of theatrical finance—on which Priestley has written at length in his book *Theatre Outlook*. O'Casey and Bridie agree on what I think is a most important point—that most plays are bad plays. I have been accused sometimes of defeatism for putting forward this very theory which is based not only on a long-suffering attendance at London first nights but on a laborious process of reading plays ranging in date from the English Moralities to *The Cocktail Party* (which is not meant as a hint that I think Mr. Eliot's a bad play). When we speak of the glories of English drama, we take a great deal for granted. There have been few, very few, periods in the history of our theatre when nine out of ten of the plays written were not beneath contempt from a critical standpoint. As an example, I point to the nineteenth century, during eighty years of which a monstrous output of plays produced perhaps a dozen worth re-reading or re-staging. There have been fertile periods like the Elizabethan, the Restoration, the Hanoverian (roughly the period in which Goldsmith and Sheridan dominated) and the Shavian. The scholar or the specialist can produce his pet plays outside these periods to prove that there were other fruitful times, but the practical man of the theatre, looking for something to revive, will on the whole waste his time ploughing through the volumes of collected plays written in the long pauses. He will find futility rather than fertility.

Against this background it is clear that nobody need worry himself, because we have got through fifty years of the twentieth century without producing a dozen plays of lasting value. Against this background it is easy to understand the unanimity of O'Casey and Bridie on the badness of most plays. I wish more people would trouble themselves to read old plays. Then we should have less dolorous nonsense about the bad state of the theatre today. Compared with 1650, 1750, or 1850, this has so far been an average year—

that is to say it has produced (in London) one English play which may be worth reviving a hundred years from now—I mean *The Cocktail Party*—even if the scholars of that time decide that it is really a prose play of unusually vivid quality rather than (as the unlettered contemporary critics believed) a play in verse.

IN DEFENCE OF THE CRITICS

Dramatic criticism has been an important feature of daily journalism for so long that it is taken for granted. Nobody (including the critics themselves) regards it as a form of activity which can be improved by any reassessment or by a different approach. Consequently, critics are sometimes led to think that their readers accept opinions and standards without question. Yet, when the B.B.C. began to develop 'The Critics', it was clear that listeners (who are, presumably, also readers) were apt to care a great deal about both the manner and the matter of criticism. The critics found themselves by no means immune from criticism. Their newspaper colleagues are sometimes lulled into a belief that nobody ever writes to the Editor except a disgruntled actor or actress, and it is well known that in 'the profession' the only acceptable form of 'criticism' is praise, sometimes known as 'constructive criticism'.

Much dramatic criticism is written in a hurry, and is over-compressed to satisfy the Philistinism of Editors. Nevertheless, it is—in most newspapers and in even more periodicals—written by serious men and women whose love of the theatre approaches passion—how could they otherwise put up with the punishment of attending first nights which, nine times out of ten, are barren? But speed and compression are qualities of the journalist rather than of the critic, and when they are applied to writing about good plays, they sometimes give an effect of off-handedness quite alien to the real feelings of the writer. This is one reason why the critics' writings do not always represent their true opinions. There is another, more potent, reason. Critics usually go to first nights where they join an audience which is almost entirely artificial. In the stalls their fellow playgoers are often 'deadheads'—holders of free tickets issued by the management from a variety of motives. In the gallery there is an audience which goes to first nights as a habit and is sometimes about as critical as an audience of 'fans' at a speedway. Perhaps there are a few genuine playgoers in the upper circle, but their opinion is of no importance to either the management or the newspapers if the stalls and the gallery happen to engage in one of their periodical duels of cheering and booing.

It is obviously impractical—because of the demands made by editors on behalf of readers—for critics to attend plays perhaps a week after they have opened. First night criticism is an evil, but apparently a necessary one. But, for the sake of the critics themselves, I would like to see some of them going to plays about a month after the opening and writing a reassessment. Then they might be able to record the subtle changes which take place during the lifetime of a play. They might notice how the meretricious glamour of the 'fashionable' first night throws the play itself out of focus. They might, moreover, notice how the actors, if they have their hearts in the job, build up poor plays in a matter of weeks so that the poorest dramatic material can presently appear to be the work of a finished playwright.

Heaven forbid that I should seem to offer more sweated labour to our critics, but for all our sakes I think they should consider whether they fulfil their function by merely going to first nights—and it does not alter my view to know that there are some critics who go to plays several times during their run, and even pay for their seats. I want to see them writing about the plays they go to a second or third time; because then, I think, they will give themselves and their readers a quite new view of the development of modern plays. The point to be proved is that half the development is in the hands of actors and actresses, not dramatists and producers, which may indeed explain why some of the most barren periods in our dramatic history have produced some of our most powerful actors.

GASTRONOMICAL NOTES

WHERE TO EAT IN PARIS

By HENRY KAHN

SOME difference of opinion exists among experts as to whether cooking is an art or a science. Some maintain insistently that it is an art, while others doggedly insist it is a science. There is also a third school of thought which believes it is a little of both, and this school is probably right.

It is not my intention to discuss whether cooking is an art or science in this article, however, but to inquire into the unchallenged art of composing a menu. This *is* an art indeed. I remember 'eunuch' once being defined for me by a lively old gentleman of eighty as a man who knows how the thing is done, though he cannot do it himself. This might also apply to many a connoisseur of food. He may not know that a *sauce béchamel* is the basis of many other sauces, or that *fonds de veau* is an essential ingredient for the success of a *canard à l'orange*, but he does know how the finished dish should taste, what should precede and what should follow it, which vegetable, if any, should be eaten, and which wine drunk with it.

I am painfully aware, of course, that there are snobs of the table, and have little time for the man who insists haughtily that he can only take an *Hermitage* or *Graves blancs* with his *Oeufs archiduc*. I am equally intolerant, however, of the gastronomic heretics who take *Pommes Pont Neuf* with *Pieds de veau Provençale*, which I once had the misfortune to witness in a London restaurant of some repute.

The art of composing a menu is one which grows on the enthusiast as he learns to appreciate the great works of the kitchen. The task is more difficult when entertaining at home, for then there may be no hand to guide him, as in a restaurant, and the enthusiast may fall into error; for, in composing a menu, as for most other things, knowledge is the handmaiden of taste.

I once had the good fortune to see a menu composed by the great *Carème* for a banquet served at the Tuileries. It comprised seven different services including no fewer than forty-seven different dishes. Another menu which it fell to my lot to study, composed and prepared by the great Auguste Escoffier at the Savoy Hotel in 1899, contained twenty-five different dishes, including such masterpieces as *Timbales de truffes au champagne* and *Foie gras poché au Cliquot*.

These days, of course, we eat less, and not simply because restrictions will not permit us to indulge ourselves, but also because the way of the world is towards restraint in luxury rather than surfeit. This may or may not be a good thing; it is a matter of opinion. However, restraint does not mean that we should sit down daily to a Barmecide feast. On the contrary, when opportunity offers, we should make the most of it.

Now it is possible that many readers will be going to Paris this year, and on that side of the Channel opportunity knocks regularly and with insistence. Most visitors will eat in restaurants and it might be a good thing to know where to eat well at a reasonable price.

I do not mean to indicate those famous restaurants where the trappings and velvet are as essential as the dishes offered. On the whole, these establishments are very expensive although the cooking is often, but not necessarily, superb. I can remember, in one such restaurant in 1937, having badly-cleaned chicken placed before me. The black quills of its feathers were still embedded in the bird's golden roasted flesh. I was disappointed—in fact, disgusted.

The first consideration in these days of restricted allowances is price. But, as there are no fewer than 46,000 restaurants in France, the selection is wide enough to suit all purses. Next in importance to price come attention and care, for, where these are found, quality and good cooking are also present. And so this brings me back to the question of composing a menu.

Eating out is a pleasure, but also carries responsibilities if we take our food seriously. For most Britons, visiting France these days means eating meat twice a day, and steak at least once daily. This is comprehensible, of course, because of the meat

shortage in Britain and also because pre-war Englishmen enjoyed their thick steaks with fried onions and potatoes perhaps more than any other dish.

Steak, however, is what the Americans very rightly call a 'short call' dish, that is to say, long preparation is unnecessary. The steak is ordered and the chef grills it well, nicely or underdone, according to the taste and habit of the guest. This cooking requires skill and experience but no imagination. The average meal eaten by the British visitor to France generally includes *Hors-d'œuvre*, *steak and pommes chips*, cheese and *gâteau maison* or fruit. That is not composing a menu.

Now for a few last words before I make my introductions.

First, restaurants given below will cover a wide range and will fit the purses of most people. Secondly, they will not include such famous establishments as the *Tour d'Argent* whose pressed duck is a marvellous experience not, however, to be repeated too often as it is expensive and by no means the only great dish France has to offer, a mistake common to many rich visitors. Finally, the chefs in restaurants I shall name enjoy preparing food for guests who can really appreciate it. It is not necessary, therefore, to eat at the same restaurant twice daily to become known. Return twice or three times and mention that on your next visit to Paris you will certainly call again and you may be sure you will not only be served well but will not be forgotten.

Now let's go:

The *Escargot d'Or*, 250 Rue St-Denis, is one of the few restaurants where, if he has time, the proprietor-chef will come out of his kitchen to discuss your meal with you. Here you can be sure of every care and attention. His specialities are *Truite à la crème* and *Caneton aux Olives* or *Caneton à l'orange*. Considering its standard, this restaurant is most reasonable, a first-class meal costing about fifteen to eighteen shillings if the diner is satisfied with a fruity Beaujolais. Naturally, if a vintage wine is taken, the meal will cost more.

The *Gratin Dauphinois*, 8 Rue St. Lazare, has been a favourite of mine for many years. As long as I can remember, going back to many years before the war, *escargots en cocotte* have been on the menu and always served perfectly, that is, piping hot. I prefer my snails this way to being served in the shell, but that is a matter of taste. As the name implies, a *Gratin Dauphinois* is always to be had. This is a potato dish prepared with gruyère cheese, the yoke of an egg, fresh milk and butter; it is a delight for the palate. Monsieur Ogier's specialities also include *Homard au Porto*, *Coq au Vin*, *Crèpes au Praslin*, all enjoyed in pleasant though not luxurious surroundings for about fifteen shillings or even less. Personally I enjoy a *Pouilly Fuisse* from the wine list, but many others are included in a fine selection.

In the same neighbourhood, the *Restaurant Blanc*, 62 Faubourg, Montmartre, is a delight. This is a small establishment, slightly more expensive than the previous named. Its speciality is *Steak Flambé*, which is prepared on the table. Personally I am no great lover of these table-prepared dishes but this is an exception and should be tried. This restaurant also offers a fine selection of regional cheeses and a good meal may be had for about one pound.

Writing of cheeses, I must draw attention to *Androuet*, 41 Rue d'Amsterdam, a restaurant of which most readers knowing their Paris must have heard. Monsieur Androuet is a cheese specialist and it is possible to dine here off nothing but cheese dishes, washed down with fine wines. There are cooked cheese dishes such as a *Fondu* and *Quiche à la Lorraine* which may include (although traditionally it does not) thin slices of gruyère. The regional *Quiche Lorraine* is, of course, a close relation to what my Lancashire friends call egg and bacon pie. I had one of the finest *Poulet à l'Estragon* I have ever tasted at *Androuet*. A meal here costs something more than a pound, but is worth it.

One of the great surprises of my life was a visit to the *Auberge Landaise*, a small restaurant tucked away in a corner of Paris at 35 Rue Palestro. This is a Basque restaurant but is also quite famous for its *Confits*. Here a word of explanation. A *Confit d'Oie* is a conserve of goose, extremely difficult to prepare and very rich. This restaurant is relatively cheap.

I suppose one of my greatest experiences was a meal *chez Allard*, 41 Rue St.-André-des-Arts. This restaurant is traditionally great and patronised by gourmets of renown. If I remember correctly, I had a *Coq au Vin de Bourgogne* there once, beautifully prepared and exceptionally rich, since it included in its sauce a glass of *fine Champagne* and a bottle of old Burgundy. The atmosphere *chez Allard* is pleasantly disarming and one quickly feels at home.

Jean Maccario, who used to work at the Ritz and now has a restaurant of his own, the *Chauland*, 18 and 20 Rue Fabert, has an open mind. When I once asked him why he did not specialise, he replied 'I offer a French kitchen. That is my speciality. You have only to phone me and I will prepare any speciality in advance.' For this reason his menu is simple and consists of dishes easy to prepare, which will not spoil from standing: a *Poulet en Cocotte Grande Mère*, for example; *Rognons flambe à l'Armagnac*, or *Tournedos Henri IV*. The *Chauland* is not cheap, but a very fine meal can be had for a pound or twenty-five shillings including some of the best clarets and an Armagnac Réserve Chauland which he describes as *divinement apprécié*.

Anyone with a taste for Russian food at a reasonable price, taking into account the quality of the cooking, should try the *Caneton*, 3 Rue de la Bourse. This restaurant is French, with Russian specialities superbly prepared. A *Cotelette de Voleille Pojarsky* costs about ten shillings and the *blinis* are a shilling each. You do not have to take caviar with them, of course. The Caneton is another restaurant with a very wide range, for the menu includes *Kebab à l'Orientale* (a mutton dish) at nine shillings, and *Cuisse de Volaille Americaine*, at ten shillings.

This selection, necessarily very limited, is something to begin with. But perhaps the best indication when trying to discover restaurants is to follow one's nose, study menus displayed by restaurants and take a chance. In Paris, nine times out of ten, the result is a pleasant surprise. My selection has one purpose: to break the visitor away from steak and chips. Note the dishes proposed, discuss them with the chef, compose your menu in advance, and enjoy your meal as the gods enjoyed ambrosia.

TRAVEL NOTES

ALAN ROSS

TRAVEL is the preliminary of the urge to action; the desire to move the just conscious itch of boredom. We are subject, like migrant birds, to seasonal and cyclical impulses. What we travel towards varies like the graphs of history. In pampered, surfeited periods, the traveller had to leave Europe and undertake suffering and discomfort for the discharge of his accumulated boredom. Ordinary existence produced satiation; luxury only increased the feelings of futility and dissipation. To regain innocence, to re-acquire sensation, the body had to do penance. The imaginative adventurer in the twenties and thirties had to go to China, Abyssinia, or Tibet; to the West African interior or into the South American jungles and mountains. Travelling itself, as Evelyn Waugh said, was something one did as a matter of course. But since then, a generation has grown up to whom travel, in the cultured, as opposed to the troopship, sense, is something of a luxury. Their palates are not stale through over-indulgence. They are, in an opposite extreme, uneducated. Their bodies have done enough penance to last them a lifetime. They have, if anything, grown puritanical. The idea of pleasure is still tinged with guilt. The hair-shirt world of war, with its rations, identity-cards, D.P.s, restrictions, has grown into a second skin. The word 'travel', involving pleasure in landscape and buildings, good food and wine, the civilised values, still has a faintly capitalist ring about it. A society educated to believe that most people lacked the essentials of life regarded the by-products of civilisation with a suspicious eye. In a priggish, utilitarian era, happiness was a temptation to which only the weak and foolish yielded.

There are signs now of a swing away from this strictly functional view. The Marxist heaven offered no passion fruits for the weary worker. But, better educated, richer, the worker is beginning to look for

the passion fruit himself. Entering the bourgeois precincts, he is ill at ease when confronted with a menu of delights he cannot value correctly. But he must at least give the impression of knowing what he wants. Out of such humiliations of the soul, as decently private as possible, a new confidence towards beauty is born.

But Europe, aesthetically, gastronomically and culturally past its peak, retains its historic landmarks. Those who have known the best can nostalgically lament the decline in standards. Crying over the spilt milk of their own self-assured follies, lost generations of two wars ago look out from the walled-in turrets of late middle age at the last graces squeezed out of a once graceful continent. The infection spreads; the frontiers harden; the corpse dies of its own self-absorption. A handful of islands strung out along the Mediterranean become outposts of good living. Islands satisfy most of our contemporary urges; anarchic oases existing by the pleasure principle, their faults can be excused like children's sins. In a sense we encourage them. Living on them, we make a gap in time. The collar is loosened, the pressure on the throat relaxed.

However, for the time being anyway, our escape is partial. We can, true enough, explore the passionate North at leisure, but for those to whom travel is synonymous with the South, the North African coast from Casablanca to Cairo, the Greek islands and Istanbul to the east, are a rough limit. Nearer home, Corsica, Sardinia, Elba, Ischia, Procida, are accessible, beautiful, uncrowded. One could do worse than take the boat from Marseilles to Bone or Algiers, then west to Tangier and Fez, and down to Marrakesh: what one might call the Paul Bowles hinterland. The desert is particularly suitable for the nihilism of our time. Camus, Bowles, and Flaiano, exploiting the fatalistic relentlessness and inconsequence of Arabian life, have brought the Ouida, Hitchens, and P. C. Wren myth up to date. The glamour, the mysterious insouciance, the intrigue have not altered. Only Man's rôle has undergone a change fundamental to our time. The protagonist-hero, impelled to violent action on behalf of assured moral principles, no longer exists. In his place Man is seen at the mercy of elements, disease, insanity. Deprived of belief, uncertain of the individual's rôle, cynical of good faith, destiny is the only shadowy companion of his exhaustion and fear. The contemporary hero is paralysed by knowing too much. Yet he does not know what is right for himself. Gin in hand, he sweats at tables set under palms, the sunset crushed out like juice along an eloquent horizon. Around him, weapons and drugs change hands. He accepts responsibility for, but denies his positive rôle in, an ugly situation. He says No to life, because it has failed him. Yet he is spiritually sterile, because he has gone beyond acknowledging failure. He has embraced defeat. In the grip of this embrace, he endeavours to give quality to his last utterances. 'It is closing time in the gardens of the West.'

* * *

What, then, does Europe still offer in the way of unfettered pleasure? France, buoyant on coca-cola, the *dancings* thumping non-alcoholically into skies over-hot, cicada-orchestrated, gun-metalled. A strangely-populated Riviera, the cactus coastline giving out into faded redoubts of pleasure, the peeling buttresses of an earlier epoch. But the striped maillots are still charmingly shed under buff cliffs, the shingle deepening into miraculous blue, crinkled like crêpe paper, over richly wrought sea-beds. There is Bordeaux and the claret country; Dijon and Beaune, the Burgundy lands, sheltering under the mountains of the Haute Savoie, the lakes watered with nineteenth-century tears, confessions and reminiscences; the Atlantic breaking itself up on the sands of Biarritz. Or Switzerland, a toy-country of precise miniature pleasures, but well-armoured in the major arts of philosophy. Further south, the Italian Riviera, Rapallo, Santa Margherita, Nervi, flower-decked extremities of nervous, three-tiered Genoa. A place for intrigue, an invitation to adventure. It is not really the time for Florence or Rome, nor even Venice now in the throes of the Bienale. The time for them is earlier or later. But July demands the sea or mountains. The Dolomites or perhaps Volterra. Some of Lawrence's best

descriptive writing is in *Etruscan Places*, but none of it better than the essay 'Flowery Tuscany', a sustained piece of poetic prose almost unique in naturalistic writing for its exact, lyric perception.

* * *

What does the idea of travel mean to the contemporary writer? In happier days it was an unplanned necessity. Now the artist has to dart out at a pre-arranged time, for a more or less prescribed period, and, if he is wise, to a carefully chosen place. The free-will of a Norman Douglas, Huxley or D. H. Lawrence, even of a Waugh or Graham Greene, is denied him. He cannot afford to waste time. The relationship between his work and the landscape of his choice must be integral. I have collected a few statements from some contemporary writers and painters. They vary widely, revealing and indicative in different ways, yet their essences are remarkably similar.

For instance, *William Sansom*: 'A dustbin in London can be as stimulating to a writer (by writer is meant "poet", not documentator) as Etna in eruption: often more, for more false art hangs around Etna than a dustbin, there's more air round the bin. Chekhov said: "Ask me to write a story about this bottle and I will write you a story under the title *A Bottle*." Writers don't need to travel. But to travel can help—most, and simply, as a sort of tonic, as a tuning-up of the sensibilities by excitant differences in the air. Those senses should be at their height at home. But often—and it always depends on the individual writer—they are not. Too often what is called "learning what the other half of the world does" is simply an escape from the first half: too often one does not learn more about humanity as a whole, but seeks an escape from people by putting them in fancy dress. Often, for instance, one cannot understand what is being said around one—and that is a relief; one is excused the *cliché* of everyday talk that may have tried one's patience at home.

'Differences in the quality of living cannot affect literature. A song-loving Greek and a silent English porter must have the same value when written down as characters in a literary work. So why go looking for one rather than the other? Simply for a change—because the porter has become invisible. Virgin experience is needed, with its valuable nervous impact. But there are dangers. Of seeing too much, of becoming confused: it is always as well to write long after an experience, when it has been well digested, when only the important bone remains. And there is the danger of too much factual knowledge—always tempting, but often more personal a luxury than an essential to writing.'

And *Laurie Lee*: 'Travel, for the poet, is as necessary as bread. It enlarges his vocabulary of experience, teaches him new tricks of living, and provides him with oblique perspectives from which to review his personal situation. Travel is the great restorative. Like a love affair, or a short illness, it shocks the senses and purges the mind of habit. Poets should travel as regularly as birds; new regions provide new zones of innocence in which may be discovered unsuspected fertilities. But in the ritual of travel it is as well to remember that the return is often as important as the going forth. For I am convinced that—in spite of the great exceptions—the poet works best at home, steeped in the running sounds of his working language. Exile feeds the heart, but jangles the ear, so don't stay away too long.'

Sansom and Lee are visual writers. They work outwards from the thing seen, like painters. The imagination, particularly in Sansom's case, becomes a notebook of the unusual. He gives the irrelevant litter of landscape detail a new significance by a very personal juxtaposition of objects. Between these objects and his characters a special relationship is set up.

Literature, like most other arts, has become specialist. We prefer style, form, clarity, to the passionate view; the curious to the essential, the unusual to the obvious. Yet it does not preclude feeling. But usually, as for instance in Sansom, feeling is directed on to inanimate objects. This essentially modern tendency need not imply bloodlessness, but simply a shifting of attention. People, because as types they are familiar to the writer, are taken for granted. They seem to be waiting for landscapes to occupy. Yet, as *Roy Fuller*

points out, a landscape and a writer's successful relationship to it depend on personal affinities which do not necessarily coincide with his preferences: 'The sort of place I like to go to and the sort of place which affects me as a writer are usually two sorts of place. I like to go to a warm climate, a small, civilised town, excellent bathing, a view on to the mountains, good food and drink. But the places I remember best, which touch my work and which perhaps can be said to have influenced me are very different. They are such dubious locations as industrio-rural Yorkshire valleys, streets of corrugated iron shanties in Cape Town, the docks at Chatham, Kenya railway stations, moors looking over Lancashire chimneys. But then, like many writers, the places I *choose* to go to are just one more example of the sacrifices the staid artist makes to the social and domestic virtues. Sacrifices which, as Busoni said, are to be distrusted for they are only a cloak for an over-ruling desire for personal comfort. The important places are those to which one is sent—unwillingly—by the age.'

John Minton makes a similar point: that pleasure-travel and work-travel are totally different things. Very often it is with the latter that the important rapport is made: 'As a traveller making drawings from which to make paintings, I am attracted to places where there is a strong individual flavour of climate and living. For example, anywhere which derives its existence from the sea is likely to be good to draw—marine architecture, quaysides, boats, fishing—all the complicated mass of detail and shape which surround the activity of going to sea. Ports in Corsica, Cornwall, the Spanish coast. Industrial towns for the same reason, having some reality and authenticity which, for instance, seaside resorts and the London suburbs have not. These are two of many possibilities. As to the actual drawing, the subject itself dictates the method and approach. Travelling in Aix is like seeing endless Cézannes, Kent like Samuel Palmer, Arles like Van Gogh, Tahiti like Gauguin: for all these painters used what was there and it is out of this identification with the landscape that they formed their style and idiom.'

Keith Vaughan writes: 'A landscape must be familiar; otherwise I see only the superficial dramatic aspects any other sightseer sees. The ones that have revealed most to me are the ones outside the window of my studio. Trees and sky and some man-made object, such as a house—that is enough to start the reaction. If there is water too, then it is almost perfect . . . I don't mean that it should be empty. A landscape can only be measured by its remoteness from, and similarity to, human beings. But they must be remote as the landscape is remote, however familiar, and visible objects only . . . . It may take anything from three days to three months to make contact. What I like best is a small, compact, unspectacular landscape, combining as much of the three basic elements—air, earth, and water—within a space not so large that I couldn't walk around it in half an hour. I do not like views or mountains and I like the sea only when looking landward . . . In one such landscape there would be enough material for a lifetime. There would be no need to change because the landscape itself is changing, each hour of the day and week of the year. The longer one watches, the more one sees.'

* * *

An integral relationship between landscape and its inhabitants. Travel as stimulant and tonic, but the familiar offers sufficient subject if it is closely observed. Return is as important as departure, for unfamiliar clothes, habits, etc., distract from the essential change, like stage-effects. A writer needs 'the running sounds of his working language'. The most valuable destinations are those where we are sent 'by the age'.

These are a few points that have arisen. Yet ultimately every artist has to capitalise his limitations. He likes what stimulates him; he is not necessarily stimulated by what he likes. His life is an arrangement between stimulation and execution, each demanding different lives, having different claims. And, unrolling the map, he must make up his mind whether he most needs an aperitif or a sedative. It is one of the sadnesses of our time that he has to decide that at all.

AIR TRAVEL NOTES

JOHN STROUD

LOOKING FOR GUSTS

For a number of years, airline operators have been promising their passengers over-the-weather flying: that is, flight in calm regions above cloud and turbulence. The approach of jet-propelled airliners flying at speeds of around 500 m.p.h. and at heights of about 40,000 feet appeared to bring this era of calm flight nearer to reality.

Unfortunately, the calm over-the-weather area did not appear to be always quite as calm as predicted. A number of pilots engaged in flying high-speed high-altitude experimental aircraft reported peculiar patches of severe turbulence in clear air. Even the slower and lower flying Constellations on scheduled services had encountered conditions which had been uncomfortable for their passengers.

This discovery was very serious, and looked like upsetting the plans of the airlines anxious to introduce the new equipment which would take advantage of gas-turbine power and pressurised cabins to give their passengers this long-promised over-the-weather flight.

Britain, having the lead in gas-turbine powered airliners, is particularly interested in the operation of these new aircraft, and it was therefore decided that investigation would have to be made into clear air gusts.

Consequently a small research unit was set up by the British European Airways Corporation and the Ministry of Supply. This unit was headed by Dr. G. S. Hislop and the research flights were made with a de Havilland Mosquito aircraft, piloted by Captain T. T. Thomas, and having Mr. D. L. Jones as navigating officer.

This crew spent much time flying the Mosquito over the British Isles and between Britain and points on the Continent which are served by British European Airways.

The normal procedure for these flights consisted of a series of climbs and descents between 20,000 and 40,000 feet. At intervals of 5,000 feet, readings were taken of turbulence and temperature. When a turbulent area was discovered, the climb and descent method was abandoned and the turbulent area fully investigated.

One of the main objects of these experiments was to find, if possible, the cause of these clear air gusts and ways of forecasting their positions and heights so that passenger services could be routed to avoid them.

This research unit has now closed down and, although it is not yet possible to give details of the results achieved, we have asked Captain Thomas to record some of his impressions of the work. These we reproduce here.

'When meeting these bumps, it was somewhat similar to being in a fast car speeding along a smooth highway and suddenly running over a series of uneven ruts across the road. The bumps are sharp-edged and there is no rise or fall in the aircraft but rather a severe jolting. In general the bumps are symmetrical and therefore give no lifting or falling of one wing. I believe some of the bumps we encountered would have been sufficiently severe to have overbalanced standing passengers and to have made things very uncomfortable for sitting passengers.

It is perhaps interesting to compare clear air bumps with the bumpiness in a Cumulonimbus cloud. In Cumulonimbus there are large up-and-down draughts which give a swell effect on the aircraft, sometimes making it rise and fall several hundred feet. The sharp-edged gusts are superimposed on this swell. In clear air there is generally no swell, but just the sharp-edged gusts. Cumulonimbus bumps may be compared with rough seas, and clear air bumps with the rapids of a river. Clear air type bumpiness is often encountered in the smaller isolated cumulus cloud.

'During these investigations, our flights

at 30,000 feet and above were virtually clear of significant cloud for some ninety-seven per cent of the time, and flying conditions were ideal except for the occasions when clear air bumps were met. There is a greater percentage of effective ground cover by cloud than in flights at 10,000 feet and below. This hasn't much significance, except that perhaps for passenger interest some form of moving screen, showing the ground passed over, may be an advantage. Also there is less scope for ground pin-pointing for use in navigation.

'It has been very interesting pioneering work, during which much valuable information was obtained, and we all enjoyed doing it. We were sorry when the unit closed down, not only because it meant the end of this work, but also because we felt that the work was not completed. I believe that clear air gust investigation will have to be carried on to a finality some time in the future when there is a more suitable type of aircraft available; one that will be fully pressurised, having a ceiling of 50,000 feet and over, a range of at least 1,000 miles and capable of carrying a full range of self-recording scientific instruments.

'Unless a method of forecasting these clear air bumpy layers is discovered, pilots of the high-speed airliners will have to be constantly on the alert and passengers will be faced with the uncomfortable prospect of being strapped in at all times during high-speed flight.'

THE BRITISH AIRLINE PATTERN

Britain has operated many of its post-war airlines with uneconomical wartime and adapted wartime aircraft. The replacement of these aircraft by purely civil designs, embodying comfort, speed, safety and economy, has been a major problem for both the long-distance route operator, British Overseas Airways, and the shorter-haul operator, British European Airways.

B.O.A.C. has energetically tackled this problem and is fast approaching a period of operation when only four types of passenger aircraft will be in service. These will be the American-built Stratocruiser used on the North Atlantic services between Britain and both Canada and the U.S.A.; the American-built Constellation used on the Central Atlantic routes and between Britain and Australia; the Canadian-built Argonaut class used on routes to the Near, Middle and Far East and to South America, and finally, the British Hermes, which is to serve the African routes. This pattern is now almost complete.

British European Airways is at a slightly different stage, being more fortunate in having had the 27-seat British Viking in service on most of its Continental routes for nearly four years.

The B.E.A. re-equipment programme is of particular interest, in that it gives for the first time the relationship of the piston-engined airliner to the airscrew-turbine type, while a comparison between B.E.A. and the future stages of B.O.A.C.s re-equipment gives a comparison between the airscrew-turbine airliner and the pure-jet aircraft.

B.E.A.s policy has called for the procurement and introduction of a fleet of twenty piston-engined Airspeed Ambassador monoplanes and a fleet of about twenty-five airscrew-turbine Vickers-Armstrong's Viscount airliners. These two classes of aircraft will operate all of the Corporation's Continental routes and most of its domestic services.

This operation gives the first clear picture of how these two classes complement each other. The Ambassador is to be used on the short-stage routes, such as London–Paris and London–Brussels, where its piston engines will still be the most economical and efficient for the job, while the Viscount with gas-turbines driving airscrews will serve the longer routes in the London–Rome, Lisbon, and Stockholm range. It is on these longer ranges that the airscrew gas-turbine proves most economical. With the introduction of these new aircraft, B.E.A. will provide a very high standard of service.

The Viscount has recently made a tour of a number of the European capitals and it has greatly impressed the airline operators, particularly by the fact that the

cowlings were only opened when technicians wished to inspect the gas-turbines, it having been unnecessary to remove them for maintenance during the whole tour. This would have been impossible with piston engines and it will have a very great effect on airline economics. The cost of maintenance will drop, and as this is about the biggest single item of expenditure in airline operation, it will almost certainly bring about a reduction in air fares. This in turn offers new prospects of travel to many people who at present have been unable to enjoy this necessity of life.

Immediately before the Viscount left for its European tour, which may well bring some European orders, I was fortunate in having the opportunity of flying in this aircraft.

The first impression of the Viscount from outside is one of a business-like aeroplane of medium size with very tiny engines, for the gas turbines are minute compared with piston engines of equivalent power.

The entry door is about the largest I have seen on an aeroplane, and this is psychologically good as it dispenses with the familiar impression of getting into an aeroplane through a small hole. Having entered the Viscount, there is another welcome for the passenger. This is no tunnel with rows of seats. The passenger accommodation is divided into two spacious cabins, between which is the pantry. The seats are arranged in pairs on either side of a wide aisle, with the front row of seats in each cabin facing aft. This gives four sets of facing seats with tables between them.

It has been argued that airliners having pressurized cabins would inevitably have small portholes rather than windows, as large openings could not be cut into a pressurised fuselage. Vickers have made nonsense of this theory. The Viscount has the finest windows of any transport aeroplane yet produced. These are large oval windows extending low down beside each seat and offering a magnificent view of the earth or cloudscape.

Normally in a transport aeroplane, however well silenced, there is no doubt as to the fact that the engines have been started —there is a roar and vibration. In the Viscount only a slight whistle informs the passengers that the turbines are running.

The Viscount taxies smoothly even on the fairly rough grass aerodrome from which I flew. Taking-off is quite normal except for the fact that even at full power there is no vibration and only very little noise. The climb is steep, and the Viscount reaches its cruising level in a very short time.

From the passengers' point of view, the Viscount and all gas-turbined powered airliners have two great contributions to make to air travel: complete lack of vibration and a great reduction in noise. These in turn greatly reduce fatigue and, together with increased speed, will render a flight from London to Rome less tiring than are present day flights of only a quarter of that distance.

Much has been said and written about the jet-propelled airliner being silent. This is not true and there is little possibility of silent flight. When I flew in the Viscount on this occasion, the cabin pressure blowers were making a noise rather like a vacuum cleaner, but these are in process of being silenced. On an earlier flight without pressurisation I noticed only a very slight hum from the engines. In addition, it is not generally realised that the airflow around an aeroplane makes a fair amount of noise; therefore the greater the reduction in engine noise, the greater becomes the problem of sound-proofing the noise of the airflow which had hitherto been obliterated by the roar of the engines.

The Viscount should be in service in 1952 and it is at about that time that B.O.A.C. will introduce its pure-jet Comet. The pure-jet aircraft in this case will be flown by a different operator, but in the overall plan of British air transport it takes its place in its most economic rôle—the operation of long-range routes beyond the range of the airscrew-turbine type. So the picture is complete, with short-range piston-engined airliners, medium-range airscrew-turbine types and finally the long-range pure-jet. This may well be the pattern for many years of progressive airline operation.

NEW BOOKS

CHALLENGE OF CONSCIENCE

By Denis Hayes. *Allen & Unwin.* 15s.

Reviewed by Gerald Bailey

No story of the Second World War as it affected Britain would be complete without a reference to the small but significant minority who, on grounds of conscience, refused military service and sought to maintain their pacifist witness even in the extremities of total war. Mr. Denis Hayes, who was for six years a leading officer of a voluntary organisation for the assistance of C.O.s and their dependents, has told the history of this movement with an unpretentious faithfulness in a book which must become the standard record.

The narrative begins with the introduction of conscription in the summer of 1939, and ends with the release of the wartime C.O.s from their Tribunal obligations in a process more or less simultaneous with military demobilisation. In the intervening years some sixty thousand objectors were registered, though under the influence no doubt of a growingly critical war situation, the number of objectors in each registration fell substantially in the later stages. But, as the war proceeded, the State made ever-widening demands and presented new and more complex problems to the objector and to those who, inside and outside Parliament, were pressing his claims.

Mr. Hayes records in some detail the parliamentary progress of these various enactments and the constant, though sometimes unavailing, efforts to secure Ministerial recognition of the right of conscientious objection. But he does not omit to tell of the multifarious service of a constructive character, usually arduous and often perilous, undertaken by pacifists—for example—in ambulance and rescue work during the raids, in Dr. Mellanby's Institute where groups of volunteers were infected with scabies for medical investigations, in the assistance given to evacuees and old people by the Friends Relief Service, and in the hospital work of the Friends Ambulance Unit, which by the end of the war had operated in twenty-one countries as far apart as Britain and China.

The relatively favourable treatment accorded to the pacifist objector in the Second World War as compared with the First has been widely noticed and is amply confirmed by this book. The Tribunals were made the concern of the Ministry of Labour; the Military Representative of the First World War was conspicuously absent and the proceedings were conducted in a judicial atmosphere and, on the whole, in a friendly and understanding spirit.

The lesson of the First World War had been well learnt. Mr. Chamberlain, in a notable statement at the time of the first Conscription Bill of May, 1939, established the principle which was largely maintained even in the darkest days of the war, that there should be no persecution of those with 'perfectly genuine and very deep-seated scruples on the subject of military service'. There was an element of expediency in this attitude since the contrary policy was recognised to be 'both a useless and an exasperating waste of time'. But more important, it was a tribute alike to the sacrifices made by the C.O.s of the First World War and to the strong libertarian tradition of the British people. It was a recognition, too, though not always a fully conscious recognition, that to guard against totalitarianism at home was to fight it more effectively abroad.

Reading this piece of history within the prospect of atomic bombs, and other mass-destruction weapons, compels speculation as to the possibility of contracting-out of 'the cosmic arson' which the next war, if we permit it to happen, may well involve. The effort is properly being made to secure the international recognition of conscientious objection to military service in the projected United Nations Covenant of Human Rights.

CHEKHOV

A LIFE OF CHEKHOV

By Irene Nemirovsky. *Grey Walls Press.* 12s. 6d.

CHEKHOV IN MY LIFE

A LOVE STORY

By Lydia Avilov. *John Lehmann.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by E. Lampert

Gorki said that one should write about Chekhov as Chekhov himself wrote *The Steppe*, a short story with a characteristic atmosphere, 'so light and so pensively sad in a Russian way'. The story describes a long, uneventful journey of a little boy over the boundless steppe, from his native village to a distant town: it is a kind of languid, melodious poem made out of the trivial, dull and dusky reality of life. Miss Nemirovsky's *A Life of Chekhov* is almost entirely undocumented and, therefore, as a 'serious' biography has little value, but hers, as well as the other book under review (somewhat ominously called *Chekhov in My Life—A Love Story*), is one of the few to which one would turn for, and in which one would find, the atmosphere referred to by Gorki. This may well show a clearer way to a proper estimate of Chekhov's character and significance than any meticulous, authoritative account of his life and literary career. Nemirovsky, a young Russian novelist who spent her life as an *emigrée* in France and perished in a German concentration camp during the war, shows genuine biographical talent, and, even if one feels apprehensive about 'fictionalised' biography, the warmth and humanity with which it is unfolded here should commend her book to many. The other book contains valuable and hitherto unknown material of a personal character about Chekhov and, despite the title, it is free from pretension and flourish, and is unassuming, gentle and forthright, as befits the hero of Lydia Avilov's love story.

One of the dominant impressions we receive of Chekhov's life is his complete inability to commit himself in any activity and particularly in any human relationship: he always seemed to feel as though he were somewhere else. We are told that he even re-read his stories as though they came from a stranger. Not one among those who were nearest to him ever knew really what went on in his soul. His life was devoid of all that is either passionate or fanatic, perhaps even deeply felt or strongly reasoned, and so in any way strongly expressed. The well-known Chekhovian theme of unsurmountable isolation and lack of mutual understanding between human beings was characteristic of Chekhov's own attitude to his surroundings and his fellow-men. From this came his sense of an impersonal, impenetrable environment, the irony, the freaks of humour. From this came also the curiously static tendency in his stories and plays which, with all their poetic richness and profound emotional symbolism, are entirely devoid of plot, action, even of subject-matter ('the most undramatic drama', as a Russian critic called Chekhov's plays); and it is really something of an irony when Chekhov says, *à propos* of Tolstoy, that we feel, in the work of a great genius, that he is always taking us towards a goal. Tolstoy, by the way, regarded Chekhov's plays, including the *Three Sisters* (in the opinion of some the best play since Shakespeare), as 'even worse than Shakespeare's!'

Kuprin wrote of Chekhov: 'He could be good and generous without loving, tender and attentive without attachment. As soon as he made someone's acquaintance, he invited him home, asked him to dine, did him a service, and then later, in a letter, he described it all with a feeling of cold lassitude.' Always serene and kindly, tender and urbane, without bitterness and without hypocrisy, he never betrayed agitation and never lost his sense of proportion. Like his favourite heroes, he was eminently unpractical—at the height of his literary success he sold all his works to a publisher for a mere 75,000 roubles (about £4,000) —and gave away much of his money. He had to a high degree that quality we all know the meaning of but can hardly define —charm. Of himself Chekhov gave the following portrait: 'A young man, the son of a serf, a petty shopkeeper, brought up to respect rank, to kiss the hand of priests, an idolater of other people's thought, grateful for every crust of bread, often whipped . . . tormenting animals, liking to dine with rich relations . . .' Of his literary work

Chekhov spoke very little and very unwillingly; if he did so, it was with what Gorki calls 'extreme chastity'. One day Tolstoy was expressing his admiration for one of Chekhov's short stories: 'It is like lace,' he said, 'made by a chaste young girl; there were such lace-makers in olden times; they used to depict all their lives, all their dreams of happiness in the lace-design . . .' Tolstoy spoke with great agitation, while Chekhov was sitting there with the usual consumptive flush on his cheeks, his head bowed, carefully wiping the glasses of his *pince-nez*. He was silent for a long time, then he sighed deeply and said in a low, bashful voice: 'There are many misprints in it . . .' (from Gorki's diary).

Outwardly he was the gay, charming, simple, gentle 'Antosha', ready to oblige, happy to have people round him, to help his brothers, to flirt with young women or to have love-affairs with them, but inwardly he seemed to be robbed of the consequences of his acts, and life remained dull and cold for him. 'As far as I am able to understand the order of things,' he wrote to a friend, 'life is composed uniquely of horrors, worry and mediocrity, which follow and overlap one another.' The ineffaceable impression of boredom and aimlessness, of disillusion and 'giftlessness' (*bezdarnost*) on the lips and in the yawns of Chekhov's heroes is characteristic of his own mood and attitude to life. The impression is, in fact, neither of tragedy nor of comedy, and there is no vision which would make his sense of disillusion, tedium and vulgarity, either tragic or comic. The only point of relief is perhaps that life, as seen by Chekhov, life in its very meaninglessness and vacuity, makes us feel a restless yearning for something more: because we are human, we are, like Chekhov's heroes, never satisfied, and throw ourselves into a striving, however impotent and objectless, for the ineffable.

It is strange how little influence Chekhov had in Russia; now his world has become a matter of the past, remoter even than that of Turgenev. And yet it is curiously akin to the horrors and farces of our own double-faced time.

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HUTCHINSON

THE KON-TIKI EXPEDITION

By Thor Heyerdahl. *Allen & Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by George Seaver

Second only to the thrill of doing something that has never been done before must be the thrill of doing something that has never been done since prehistoric times and in all human probability will never be done again. For which reason, if for no other, the achievement recorded in this book must rank as an epic, and its record as a classic. Six Men on a Raft, and all of them landsmen, adrift in the mid-Pacific across 4,300 sea-miles, and chosen for the adventure (it has been aptly said) on principles suggesting those on which the Bellman chose his crew for the hunting of the Snark: the leader, a biologist; his companions—a refrigerating engineer; a painter who could use both a sextant and a guitar; an ethnologist (the only Swede among Norwegians); and two experts in wireless telegraphy. And each one of them put his special talents to effective use. Not seldom in the history of high adventure have great exploits been the offspring of a theory. Polynesian legend told of the peopling of their islands by the descendants of a sun-king, Kon-Tiki, from far away eastwards oversea. Peruvian legend told of the disappearance of a mythical hero, Virakocha, westwards oversea, caused by the Inca conquest of Peru. Again, archaeology showed a surprising similarity between the colossal images on Easter Island and elsewhere in the Polynesian group, and those carved monoliths erected in the pre-Incan Stone Age in Peru. Again, oceanography gave scientific certainty to the perpetual drift of the South Equatorial Current westwards to the setting sun. And there were the trade winds, too; and the fact that linguistic, cultural, legendary and ethnological features are common to all these remote islanders, though a thousand miles of sea divide them. But how, without hulls or keels, could prehistoric men cross one of the stormiest regions of the Pacific Ocean? Early Spanish explorers had left descriptions of native-made rafts, made of the trunks of the giant balsa-tree which grows in Ecuador. By the method of observation and deduction—to be tested by experiment—Heyerdahl arrived at what seemed to him an obvious and irresistible conclusion. (Elementary, my dear Watson.) But it did not seem so at all to the maritime experts, the forestry specialists, the meteorologists, the rope-makers, and a host of other dismal prophets. 'If we totted up all that the different experts, each in turn, had pointed out as the vital flaw in the construction itself, there was not a length of rope, not a knot, not a measurement, not a piece of wood in the whole raft which would not cause us to founder . . . These were difficult arguments to stifle. If only one of them proved to be right, we had not a chance. I am afraid I asked myself many times if we knew what we were doing. I could not counter the warnings one by one, because I was not a seaman. But I had in reserve one single trump card . . .' If balsa-wood had floated and lashings held for Kon-Tiki fifteen hundred years ago, they would do the same again. It is worthy of remark that the felling of the timber far inland in the jungle under the Andes, and its transportation to the coast, provides material for a minor epic in itself. Faithful to the design of the old Peruvian raft-makers, they left wide gaps between the foundation logs, and when in the tempestuous Humboldt Current, pursued by gigantic waves, their raft lifted to their onset like a cork or allowed the seas to pour through it 'as if through the prongs of a fork. The advantage of a raft was obviously this: the more leaks the better—through the gaps in our floor the water ran out, but never in.' It was not till they were half-way to their distant goal that they discovered—almost by accident—how best to use their centre-board and steer a course. In calmer waters their constant companions were the creatures of the deep: whales of many kinds, sharks of many kinds, and once they stared into the gaping mouth of a whale-shark (the largest denizen of the sea) which kept them company for an hour; dolphins and bonitos, porpoises and tunnies, and flying-fish; twice they were visited by the snake-mackerel, a deep-sea fish never before seen alive; they learned how to feed man-eating sharks by hand and haul them on board by their tails. Whether you are

an ichthyologist or an oceanographer, an anthropologist or a simple mariner, you will not find it easy, once you open this book, to put it down. You will read it quickly at first because you cannot stop; you will read it more slowly the second time to savour the morsels that please you most. And if you are none of these, but just a lover of high romance, which is better than any fiction, you will find it here.

LETTERS OF FLAUBERT

Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 10s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stephen Winsten

Flaubert made it an article of faith not to appear in his works. He believed that the artist had no right to reveal his personal feelings, that the reader, when reading a novel, should see Nature and Humanity, but never the author. For that reason, these letters are amazingly interesting because they do reveal the man, and what an interesting man he was! Letters, as we all know, often reveal nothing. Read the correspondence of Dickens, and you find much about waiters and hotels but never a real confession of the soul. And there are letters that reveal a tawdry soul: Balzac's letters prove the author to be an absolute ignoramus, and provincial to the backbone, dazzled by luxury. Flaubert's letters are a striking contrast to his novels: in his work he always deliberately refrained from the fortuitous and dramatic, and especially avoided monsters and heroes. Here, however, everything is dramatised and we get monsters, heroes and his own dramatic reactions to everything. We see Madame Bovary being written; we share his agony of creation, his success and ultimate ruin; we feel with him about the invasion of France and, strangely enough, this man of a century ago faces our own immediate problems. We laugh when we read: 'One thing worries me about my book and that is its entertainment value, which is poor. It is deficient in events.'

This is not mock-modesty. The novel which proved such a success was written so laboriously that he often took weeks over a page:

'I am sick of my sluggish pace . . . But I

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(*Book Society Recommendation*)
12s. 6d.

am afraid of a rude awakening, of disillusionment when I copy out all the pages. Never mind whether they are good or bad, it is grand to write, to cease to be *oneself*, and to move among the creatures one is describing. Today, for instance, I have been man and woman at the same time, lover and mistress together, riding in the forest on an autumn afternoon under the yellowing leaves; and I have been the horses, too, and the leaves, and the wind, and the words they spoke and the red sun . . . '

While the modern novelist turns inwards to seek out the foundations of his life, Flaubert turned outwards and, through identification, was able to get to the heart of things. Not always, of course. When the Prussians entered France, he prophesied disaster: 'We are going to become a great, flat, industrial country like Belgium. The disappearance of Paris (as the seat of government) will make France dull and colourless. She will have no more heart, no more centre and, I think, no more spirit . . . ' And like many of his kind, when things go wrong, what is to be blamed but *democracy*? 'I hate democracy, that is to say, the exaltation of mercy to the detriment of justice, the negation of right; in a word anti-sociality . . . ' How often do we find that novelists who have a real understanding of human beings go wrong over social problems! As Flaubert was essentially a novelist, we can overlook his politics, but what we find difficult to pass over is the sociologist posing as an artist and trying to fit his characters into a prefabricated mould of ready-made philosophy. That Flaubert never did. He refused to put on the mantle of Divinity and to shape the ends of his creations. And even here he is not certain of his aesthetic code. He explains the comparative failure of his 'Sentimental Education' as follows: 'Every work of art should have a point, a peak, should be shaped like a pyramid, or have the light strike it on the tip of the dome. Now there is nothing like that about life. But Art is not Nature!'

As he says: 'A man talking about himself must be extravagant.' Here, in his letters, he is generous beyond measure: his light strikes the base, and the tip, of the dome.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

By George Barker. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by Michael Hamburger

In 1950, it is encouraging to find a poet who, instead of breaking with his past or retreating to a plastic ivory tower, has not only held his position but advanced well beyond it. Mr. Barker has lost none of his zest, his individuality or his vision; by practising economy and restraint, he has given new strength to his verse. Many of the shorter poems in his latest collection are immediately striking: they pierce the surface of consciousness and remain embedded in one's memory—and this, surely, is what a poem is meant to do.

Mr. Barker has always loved words for their own sake. Too many of his earlier poems were inflated with rhetoric, sometimes to the point where they burst. The texture of his recent verse is no less sensuous; but there is now a happier relationship between sound, imagery and meaning. Mr. Barker has given up the irritating habit of borrowing long words from a vocabulary obviously not his own: the kind of word which he could safely have left to Mr. Auden. He has been able to dispense with his more elaborate tongue-twisters; alliteration and assonance are used with discretion and skill, often in conjunction with orthodox rhymes. Such new poems as 'Bridal Nightmare I' have a lovely lyrical flow and a directness no less original than the dissonances in earlier volumes:

> Nightmare in whose arctic wings
> Lifelong I unmoving lie
> Folded your cold heart I sleep
> And hear the wrong-faced children weep
> Outside in uncharity. . .

News of the World contains pieces associated with Italy, Ireland, and Cornwall, two elegies on the deaths of friends and a number of poems addressed to persons; but two main themes pervade the whole book. The first is implied in the lines quoted above and bound up with Mr. Barker's own life; 'Sestina at 34', 'Turn on Your Side . . . ', the three poems called 'News of the World', 'Summer Song I and II', and the longest poem in the

book, 'To My Son', are concerned with a personal dilemma. Since readers will have no difficulty in recognising this theme, it is unnecessary to discuss it here; nor is there any need to stress its connection with the second, more general theme of 'Ode Against St. Cecilia's Day', 'The Five Faces of Pity' and 'On the Approaching Birth of a Child to Friends'. An awareness of evil—whether in the form of personal guilt or a sense of universal catastrophe—is present in all these poems and gives them unity. At the same time, Mr. Barker believes in redemption:

> But when, like War, love walks over the whole
> World and leaves it wrecked in a wilderness
> From this excess of passion, who, who shall console us?
>
> Where my love walks Pity shall redress
> All the world's wrongs. Walking at night outdoors
> The cosmological ruins whisper as I pass:
>
> What love destroys, Pity always restores.

THE ART OF BALLET

By Audrey Williamson. *Paul Elek.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Margaret Crosland

The obvious analysis of the art of ballet is into the four main divisions of: dancer, choreographer, composer, and artist. In her new book Miss Williamson keeps to the usual approach and adds nothing new. She has re-edited her earlier book *Contemporary Ballet* and expanded the eulogies of dancers and ballets seen in London and New York during the last few years.

She has not been able to decide the exact 'level' of this study. She has written mainly a revision grammar for upper forms, assuming that her readers have some background, but occasionally sends them back to form I. The relationship between choreography and painting is discussed in elementary terms, and it would have been hard, for this purpose, to cite a more unsuitable painter than Leonardo da Vinci, whose grouping lacks the fluidity essential to dance-patterns. History, however, is kept in the background, since the

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people who will benefit from this book—the average ballet-goers—are not interested in many dancers born before 1910.

It is indeed pleasant to read a book on the ballet which is not a collection of simpering anecdotes about 'Days with Diaghileff'. The author does not belong to the negative side of the I-saw-Pavlova school. The emphasis of this study is quite rightly on the present and the future, although this means too exclusively the Sadler's Wells Ballet. While everyone admires and loves them, not only as dollar-earners, it is pointless to give the impression that they are the only creative centre of the dance and deserve nothing but superlatives. It is only by the greatest luck that our dancers have not all been completely spoilt by the torrent of praise they are now receiving. Similarly, Robert Helpmann has not yet achieved that universality as a choreographer that Miss Williamson is so anxious to give him; it is dangerous to quote *Adam Zero* as a major work, and her kindly heart is a bad thing for the present critical stage of British ballet, for kindness will kill it more effectively than apathy. The problems of the moment are realised, but should be emphasised much more strongly: that contemporary choreography everywhere is pathetic in its lack of inspiration; that something must be done about male dancing or it will die out altogether; that critics are nothing like severe enough in their standards for dancing, choreography or presentation generally. These are not financial problems, but artistic ones, and this is where the positive side of the I-saw-Pavlova school holds its own.

The concentration on Sadler's Wells leads to omissions, such as the name of Sally Gilmour, from the list of Giselles. Also, it is useless to deal with the non-ballet types of theatrical dancing in one chapter of five pages. This is not much space for Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, Jooss, Pasuka, Dunham, and the Spanish dancers. It would be better to make them the subject of a separate study, which would be very valuable work.

This book lapses too often into a Saturday-night gallery style of writing. Admittedly it is as difficult to write about dancing as it is about music, but there is no need to refer (*à propos* 'Don Juan') to 'Shearer's crystalline line . . . in grave and unimpassioned contrast (to Fonteyn), a waxen flower unsinged by the other dancer's jewelled and evil fire.' Nor does one welcome—from any point of view—a description of *La Fille Mal Gardée* as 'this first balletic fledgling of Rousseau's *Nouveau* [*sic*] *Héloise*'.

There is a lot of fact in a short space, and the photographs have been well chosen to show a dancer's line or a choreographer's grouping, and are not fan-mail portraits or advertisements for theatrical make-up. An important feature also is the excellent typography of Miss Sarah Clutton, which is decorative but not florid. It brightens a useful dull book which is too full of praise and too frightened of severity.

Some Books Received

BATESON, F. W. ENGLISH POETRY. A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION. *Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd.* 10s. 6d.

BEVAN, A. J. THE STORY OF ZARAK KHAN. *Jarrolds.* 15s.

EYCK, Erich. PITT V. FOX: FATHER AND SON. *G. Bell & Sons, Ltd.* 21s.

FREMANTLE, Anne. DESERT CALLING. THE LIFE OF CHARLES DE FOUCAULD. *Hollis & Carter.* 15s.

GIELGUD, Val. ONE YEAR OF GRACE. *Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd.* 10s. 6d.

GLOVER, Edward. FREUD OR JUNG. *George Allen & Unwin.* 15s.

HART, B. H. Liddell. DEFENCE OF THE WEST. *Cassell.* 12s. 6d.

REED, Douglas. SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF SUEZ. *Jonathan Cape.* 12s. 6d.

SARTRE, Jean-Paul. WHAT IS LITERATURE? *Methuen.* 12s. 6d.

TAYLOR, A. J. P. FROM NAPOLEON TO STALIN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12s. 6d.

WOLFE, Humbert. TRANSLATION OF SELECTED LYRICS OF HEINE. *The Bodley Head.* 7s. 6d.

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